



**TOWN COUNCIL
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
MAY 11, 2010**

Michael Bowie, Chair District 2 2012
Gina Mason, Vice Chair District 1 2010
Fern Laroche, Jr., At Large 2010
Roger Cote, At large 2011
Mark Lunt, District 1 2012
Dale Crafts, District 2 2010
Lori Pomelow, At Large 2012

CALL TO ORDER & PLEDGE TO THE FLAG. The Chairman, Michael Bowie, called the meeting to order and led the pledge of allegiance to the flag at 7:00 PM.

ROLL CALL. Members present were Councilors Bowie, Mason, Crafts, Cote, Pomelow and Lunt. Councilor Laroche was excused. Also present were Stephen Eldridge, Town Manager; David Brooks, Police Chief; Sean Galipeau, Fire Chief; Wayne Ricker, Solid Waste Director; Elwood Beal, Public Works Director; Rosie Bradley, Economic Development Director; Diane Nadeau, Librarian; Pat Dow, Assessor; Jessica Maloy, Finance Director; Ryan Leighton, Town Engineer; Rick Green, Superintendent of Schools; Cathy Messmer, School Bookkeeper; School Committee Members, Traci Austin, Kathi Yergin, George Caron; Budget Advisory Board Members, Donald Fellows, Jeff Ganong, Richard Graham, Dorothy Fitzgerald, John Wierzbicki; Ken Wells, Water Commissioner; and approximately 71 citizens in the audience.

PUBLIC HEARING

SCHOOL BUDGET

Councilor Bowie said we will get started with our second public hearing. I don't see many changes in the audience from our last public hearing. We will bypass the presentations unless there are any objections and begin by taking questions on the School Budget and then the Town Budget. I am going to ask that we keep our discussion to three minutes per item. At this time, I will open the public hearing for the School Department. He said, are there any questions?

Mr. Green said there were a couple of questions last time about our student enrollment and per student cost and I do have those figures. One thing that I didn't make clear when I was asked is that, I believe, there are actually three numbers on that webpage at Maine.gov that you could come up with. One is the actual number of students attending schools, the number of resident students that are in school, and the subsidy numbers. I do have the figures from 2009 for operating costs per pupil that was reported to the Department of Education. The average was \$9,174.37 per student K-12 and the State's average was \$9,624.71 so I did look that up. I have the figures for all three levels. At the Elementary Level, our average per pupil cost was \$8,875.53 and the State's average was \$9,128.46. At the Secondary Level, our cost was \$9,806 and the State's cost was \$10,650.68. Overall, our average student operating cost was \$9,174.37 and the State's average was \$9,624.71. In the enrollment numbers that we have, if you look at this year's Town Report on page 70, we actually went back and recalculated the numbers based on enrolled students, because what was reported before included home and private school students that lived in Lisbon so the numbers were much higher. If you look at the previous year's Town Report, the resident enrollment numbers, you will notice there is a big difference and the numbers you (Tom Berry) may have found on the webpage may have reflected those numbers not the actual numbers. Last year there were 1,282 enrolled and I think it is at 1,250 right now.

MUNICIPAL BUDGET

Councilor Bowie said seeing no more questions on the School Budget, we will move on to the Municipal Budget. I am not going to read each one so if there is a specific question on a specific department I would ask that you come to the microphone and ask your question.

Michelle Swatsworth-Turmelle said I have a statement I would like to read. It does address two particular things. Councilors, in particular Councilor Mason, for months you have proclaimed to not hear from the public or at best on a limited basis. The April 27 public hearing was that, a public hearing, this is supposed to give the public an opportunity to come and speak, ask questions, pose to you their thoughts and opinions. This is not the time for the Town Council to attack the public, or make accusatory statements, that were incorrect at best. I did not stand up and make negative comments as Councilor Mason accused me of doing. I posed questions and inquired about the need of a current full time position that at present does not seem to be needed based on the current volunteer type of work and activity. It is disappointing that Councilor Mason made remarks and implied that since I was not a business owner that I would not understand what economic development was. I am guessing that I am not the only one who takes offense to that or the implication that the other 9,300 voting residents in our town wouldn't understand economic development unless we owned a business. I think at times this Town Council, or at least a few Councilors in particular, sell the knowledge of our town residents short and we are smarter and brighter than you think or give us credit for. Councilor Mason was attacking, negative, argumentative in tone, and made incorrect statements.

Councilor Bowie said Michelle. Michelle Swatsworth-Turmelle said I am not done and my three minutes are not up. Councilor Bowie said I am going to ask you to stop right now, because what you are going through right now is not pertinent to the Town Budget. Michelle Swatsworth-Turmelle said, it is, because I have two comments at the end that deal with Economic Development and Assessing. Councilor Bowie said, then, I would ask you to go directly to your comments. Michelle Swatsworth-Turmelle said I am getting to that. Councilor Bowie said, no, I would ask you to go directly to your comments or please sit down.

Michelle Swatsworth-Turmelle said here is what I have for comments on Economic Development then. I am not questioning that town funds are going to the Thanksgiving Dinner, I was correct in part, because we are paying for it, because the hours spent in coordinating it are paid in part through taxpayer money, which, yes, some of that position is matched through matching funds and grant money. However, I did ask about some of the particulars and I was spoken to in a tone that wasn't appropriate. My question was that, I asked why we couldn't look at something part-time. That still isn't addressed and instead I was attacked.

Michelle Swatsworth-Turmelle said I wanted to know why it is that a lot of people in town have taken on the philosophy, and if you ask them a lot of times the comment is, why come, why say anything, they aren't going to do anything, they are going to do what they want to anyway. I feel some of the recommendations made to the Council by the Budget Advisory Board in regards to the revaluation should be reconsidered as well. That was an additional statement that I made and I believe it was supported by Mr. Fellows as well and I still support that. So, you want to know why the townspeople don't come and speak. Representation from the last meeting is exactly why.

Councilor Bowie said are there any other questions on the Town Budget.

Dorothy Fitzgerald said I went through the budget, again, today and I hate to sound like a broken record, but I think \$4,500 is a little excessive for professional development for the Town Manager, especially at times like this when most of the residents in town are making one half to one fourth of his salary. I think that it should be cut back. At last Thursday's budget meeting, on the insurance account, I see that the town is paying life insurance for some employees. I asked the Town Manager for who and how many and he said he didn't know. Do you have an answer for that now? Mr.

Eldridge said I do not. Dorothy Fitzgerald said I did some checking and found that the town is paying life insurance for three police officers and has been doing so for some years now. I know it's only \$500 in the budget, but I think this is rather inappropriate and that they should be paying for their own. This is a time when we should be cutting things and maybe nit picking is the way to do it. \$500 is \$500 and I really do not think the town should be paying life insurance for town employees. I think it is wrong. I know some businesses in the private sector do it. I have talked to two other people that are insured by their employers, but to insure three is not appropriate.

Dorothy Fitzgerald said some of the businesses that received revolving loans and then closed, I am wondering on the revolving loans, are they paid back or are they forgiven. Councilor Bowie said revolving loans are paid by the people who were given the money. If there are complications with them going out of business, we have a disclaimer set on all of our agreements to be able to cover all our liability.

Dorothy Fitzgerald said I was going through the budget and on Town Engineer, I noticed as I was going through that mileage was \$1,500. I brought this up at the last budget workshop and somebody said that the IRS reimburses at .44 cents a mile. I checked that out. That is 3,409.09 miles that he is being reimbursed for to drive around town, the treatment plant, and various town owned buildings. I think this is a little excessive. I went to my Maine Atlas and the mileage from Kittery to Fort Kent is 368 miles, round trip is 736 miles, so that equates to 4.63 round trips from Kittery to Fort Kent and I really think that that mileage could be reduced quite a bit. Over 3,000 miles in town in one year to oversee town buildings, I think, is a little excessive.

Dorothy Fitzgerald said I would like to commend Mark Stevens on a well run department. He has the only department in town that is self-supporting. That's it. Thank you.

Councilor Bowie said any other questions on the Town Budget. Seeing none, the Chairman closed the public hearing. Thank you.

ADJOURNMENT

VOTE (2010-72A) Councilor Mason, seconded by Councilor Lunt moved to adjourn at 7:15 PM.
Order passed - Vote 6-0.

Respectfully Submitted,

Twila D. Lycette, Council Secretary
Town Clerk, Lifetime CCM/MMC

These Council meeting minutes were transcribed by Twila Lycette and proofed by Beth French.