

SPECIAL
MEETING OF CITY COUNCIL
WESTFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS
JUNE 20, 2018

The meeting was called to order in the City Council Chamber, Municipal Building, 59 Court Street, Westfield, MA at 6:00 PM by President Beltrandi.

The City Clerk called the roll. Councilors Figy and Paul were absent.

President Beltrandi asked if anyone, other than Channel 15, was recording the meeting and if so to state whether it is an audio or video recording and whether the recording is being live streamed. No one responded.

The call of the special meeting was as follows:

To conduct a public hearing on the annual budget as submitted by the Mayor, at which all interested persons shall be given an opportunity to be heard for or against the proposed expenditures or any item thereof.

President Beltrandi called the Public Hearing to order and opened the discussion to the public.

Ms. Michelle Douglas, 1177 Shaker Road addressed the Council. She requested that no cuts be made to the School budget especially the special education line items. She informed the Council that her son is in the special education program and that it is difficult to retain the paraprofessionals that work with him because of their low salary. She informed the Council that there are other parents of special education students that feel the same way but could not be at the meeting because they are home taking care of their children.

Ms. Donna Vella, 134 Joseph Avenue addressed the Council. She informed the Council that she is familiar with how budgets work. She expressed her concern that departments hurry up and spend their budget money so that it won't be cut in the following year. She suggested a reward system to employees that save money in their budgets or create ideas to cut the budget. She expressed her concern that vehicles that were purchased were too expensive. She requested that the Councilors not have closed minds about the budget and don't do things because they have always been done that way.

Mr. Ron Rix, 24 Simmons Brook Drive addressed the Council. As the School Department Finance Director he requested that the Council not cut anything from the School department budget. He informed the Council that it was a challenge in developing the budget relative to needs vs resources. He informed the Council that he is comfortable with the school department budget as submitted.

Councilor Flaherty informed the Council that he received a phone call from a resident and the resident informed him that he is moving out of Westfield because the roads are terrible, does not like the school system and taxes are too high. He informed the Council that he received another phone call from a Papermill Road resident that is livid that Papermill Road is still not fixed. Councilor Flaherty informed the Council that the Mayor did a good job with the budget and that he had to make devastating cuts to balance the budget and that he will speak more on the matter at next week's meeting.

Councilor Onyski requested Councilor Flaherty to have the Papermill Road resident call him and that he has the answers relative to the fixing of Papermill Road and that it will happen after the end of the school and before the beginning of the next school year.

Councilor Babinski informed the Council that she received an email from Rachael Bullock, 59 Bailey Drive requesting Councilors not cut the school budget especially the special education accounts.

Councilor Surprise informed the Council that he received an email from Kristen Mello, 27 Moseley Avenue expressing her concerns that that in order to fund this budget, the Mayor is requesting \$3.13 million in increased property taxes, and the use of \$1.3 million from Free Cash.

Mr. Ramon Diaz, 242 West Road addressed the Council. As a School Committee member, he informed the Council that the School Committee addressed the issue of sending students out of district and that there will be a cost savings by keeping the students in district.

President Beltrandi requested if anyone was in favor of the proposed budget. There was no one that spoke in favor.

President Beltrandi requested if anyone was in opposition of the proposed budget.

Councilor Flaherty spoke in opposition. He reviewed the budgets that were over \$1 million, as follows:

School, Health Insurance, Retirement, Police, Fire, Long Term Debt, Highway, Trash, Medicare and Technology Department. He informed the Council that all the other departments are less than \$1 million and must have taken a cut. He informed the Council that the Mayor did a good job with the budget, but the major problem is spending and there are no easy cuts.

Councilor Allie reviewed the revenue side of the budget of a 2 ½% increase which will bring in \$1.7 million, \$1.1 million will come from Free Cash, \$1 mil from health savings, anticipating a \$230,000.00 increase unrestricted government aide and new growth at \$1.2 mil. He informed the Council that is all the City has to work with and all contracts, expenses and services have to be juggled with this amount.

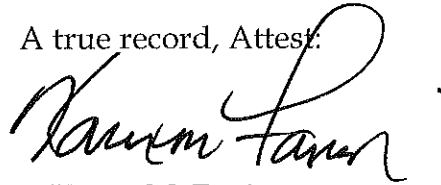
Councilor Surprise agreed that the Mayor did do a great job with the budget and making cuts, but more cuts are needed because residents do not want to pay more taxes. He informed the Council that the major parts of the budget are the contracts, unfunded mandates, and requirements when accepting grant money.

With no others appearing to be heard, President Beltrandi CLOSED the Public Hearing.

President Beltrandi thanked those in attendance, which were about 15 people and out of those 15 some were City employees. He expressed his concern that there were not more people at this important Public Hearing.

At 6:33 PM, and upon motion of Councilor Harris, it was VOTED: To ADJOURN.

A true record, Attest:

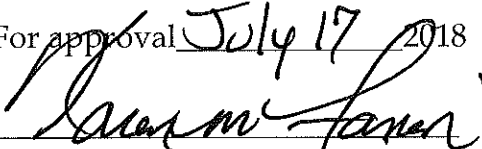


Karen M. Fanion
City Clerk/Clerk of the Council

Presented to the Mayor

Approved by the Mayor

For approval July 17 2018


Karen M. Fanion, City Clerk

July 17, 2018


Brian P. Sullivan, Mayor