

TOWN OF PORTLAND  
BOARD OF SELECTMEN  
PUBLIC HEARING  
MARCH 10, 2009

The public hearing was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by First Selectwoman Susan Bransfield. Mrs. Bransfield read the legal notice for public hearing for

Mrs. Bransfield reviewed the General Government budget for 2009—2010. The proposed general government budget totals \$11,356,718, an increase of .92% over this year's budget. There are 8 proposed staff reductions representing some unfilled positions and some potential layoffs. All departmental and Board of Education requests have been reduced. Increases will occur in Workmen's Compensation Insurance and Firefighters and Police pensions. Debt service will decrease, and State revenues and grants will decrease. Revenues from town charges and fees are down and revenue from investment income is down representing a loss of \$549,000 in revenues.

Mrs. Bransfield stated that the total budget represents a .83 mill increase over the current budget and the projected mill rate is 27.82.

Dr. Sally Doyen highlighted the Board of Education budget. The proposed budget amounts to \$17,960,642, an increase of 1.5% over the current year's budget. This figure reflects a recommended reduction from the First Selectwoman of \$275,000. Dr. Doyen commented that information regarding the stimulus package is unclear at this time and she will be receiving additional information soon.

The meeting was opened to comments from the public.

Susan Alyson Young of 533 Main Street commented about the Library budget being cut more than any other budget. The recommended staff cuts of one full-time position and three part-time positions equates to the loss of 63 part-time hours and 40 full-time hours if this budget is approved. As a result, the Library would have to reduce its hours from 52 to 37 hours per week. She asked the residents to think about these cuts before passing the budget.

Stephanie Tatro of 65 Great Hill Rd., President of the Friends of the Portland Library, commented that the town cannot afford to cut the library services for residents and asked the Board of Selectmen to reconsider the proposed cuts to the Library budget and preserve the positions that have been cut. She also voiced concern that there is not enough money going to social services and recommended supporting these services in a stronger way.

Lauren Coleman of 52 Indian Hill Avenue commented that the Library works with everyone and is an integral part of the education of students.

Stephanie Miller of 66 High Street stated that she was upset about the cut in the Library budget and would miss the services. She commented on the

replacement of two police cruisers and asked if one could be replaced this year and one next year.

Stephanie Tatro of 65 Great Hill Rd. asked about the consolidation of animal control services with Middletown. Mrs. Bransfield stated that Portland provides shelter to dogs from Cromwell and Middletown and receives fees for the service. There has been discussion about building a regional shelter in Middletown, but the details for this have not been worked out.

Stephanie Tatro questioned whether there would be a negative impact on the town's audit opinion if pension contributions were reduced. Tom Robinson, Director of Finance, did not recommend decreasing the contributions because they would have to be made up in the future. Also, this could negatively impact the town's bond rating.

Stephanie Tatro questioned the \$50,000 line item for open space. Mrs. Bransfield explained that this amount is set aside each year for the Nelson Goodrich property. Once this property is paid off, the money will go to building up for future properties that the town would be interested in purchasing.

The public hearing closed at 8:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Virginia Darna  
Recording Clerk