

PORTSMOUTH TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
JUNE 9, 2021(Wednesday)
BUDGET HEARING MINUTES

7:00 PM – Portsmouth High School Auditorium, 120 Education Lane

MEMBERS PRESENT: Kevin M. Aguiar, Keith E. Hamilton and Andrew V. Kelly

MEMBERS PRESENT BY ZOOM: Linda L. Ujifusa, Daniela T. Abbott and J. Mark Ryan

Time: 7:02 PM

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

SITTING AS THE PORTSMOUTH TOWN COUNCIL

1. Roll Call

BUDGET HEARING – The Full Budget is Available for Review on the Town’s Website
[FY 22 Town Budget](#)

Larry Fitzmorris, 50 Kristen Court – Mr. Fitzmorris believes the pension plan is at a critical status per the State. At the last audit in 2020 we are at 49.5% which is below the 60% required by the State. If this percentage continues to decline the pension will eat up all the tax revenue. The pension liability is losing money. There are 3 potential reasons for this: 1) The asset manager is currently under performing and providing subpar results in the investment fund it supports; 2) Pension liability is increasing by adding people to it as well as making increases to pension benefits to those in the system; 3) Actuarial assumptions are wrong. Mr. Fitzmorris believes that Segal, the pension investment company, is smoothing performance and that the Town should look for another pension investment company. Mr. Hamilton commented that the Town will be putting out an RFP to look for a new company.

Tom Grieb, 110 Thayer Drive, pointed out that the actuary has used the 6.48%, the wrong numbers for the rate of return discount which should be 6.75%. No mention of the change in rate was presented to the Council. The rate needs to be corrected.

Ms. Lasky said that they would look into Mr. Grieb’s concerns.

Mr. Fitzmorris wants there to be a pension summary page added to the budget so show the costs.

Time: 7:40 pm Mr. Buddemeyer arrives via Zoom

Lawrence Silvia, 24 Old Mill Lane, is concerned that the Seniors are not being taken care of in the budget and that since the Senior Center has been a single use building that it should be.

Elaine Medeiros, 25 East Terrace, says grant money is not being spent for the Senior Center and that programs will be lost.

Mr. Rainer explained that if she is referring to the Federal American Rescue money, the Town is still waiting to receive those funds. As of now there are restrictions as to what the money can be used for and that is broadband, open water and sewers. We are working with our Federal and State Legislature to see if those restrictions will be opened so that the money can be used for other things. The Senior Center is in the Civic Support Section of the budget and they have been allotted the money that was requested. The Seniors have not been forgotten. There are a number of options that are being looked into. 1) Church Community is looking into building a brand new Senior Center as well as Senior Housing. 2) We have an independent engineer and architect looking at the Ann Hutchinson building to give true

numbers as to those in the Jacob report. 3) A Masterplan for open space and recreation.

Nancy Grieb, 110 Thayer Drive, pointed out that an accounting error on page 79 that was mentioned at the April 27, 2021 meeting was not corrected and was still not correct on either page 79 or page 34. Mrs. Grieb does not support Civic Support as a whole and believes that both the Library and the Senior Center should not be under the Civic Support line. Also, she does not believe AIPC should be funded and that the Town Council could find the money to install the sprinkler system at the Senior Center by cutting the Civic Support.

Mr. Rainer told Mrs. Grieb that he would make the correction.

Elizabeth McIntyre, 132 Roger Williams Court, would like to know why there is not a section of the budget dedicated to the Senior Center. Would the Town Council consider a department for Senior Services.

Mr. Rainer said he would make a separate section for the Senior Center.

Brenda Langlais, 53 Dove Street, says Baby Boomers need the services at the Senior Center and they need a place to go where they can do things to keep themselves young.

Clarence Gdowski, 317 Vanderbilt Lane, does not want low income housing to go in at Anne Hutchinson Building, wants the building to continue to be the Senior Center.

Larry Fitzmorris, 50 Kristen Court, has concerns on the scope of the surpluses on both the School and Town side of the budget.

Tom Grieb, 110 Thayer Drive, since he pointed out the pension was over funded by \$200,000, use that money for sprinklers.

Mr. Aguiar wanted to reiterate that the building might need more work than just the sprinklers. They will take the information under advisement.

Nancy Howard, 16 Diane Drive, doesn't know what's going on with the Senior Center. There are no minutes for the meetings with Church Community Housing.

Cynthia Koniecki, 45 Elm Street, Tiverton – Senior Center Director, attends the meetings and no one is taking minutes. It was suggested that Ms. Koniecki might want to decimate the information to the Senior Center community, possibly in the Senior Center monthly flyer.

Irene Helmers, 109 Henry Danis Court, was told that the Senior Center will be closed as of July 1, 2021. Mr. Aguiar said the building has been reclassified and it will no longer be a place of assembly and it is under a limited occupancy. Ms. Helmers is concerned that if they decide to build a new center then there will not be a place to go.

Palmer Stickney, 56 Holman Street, said that in the past there has been the decision regarding the Senior Center building and that decision was to do nothing.

**Town of Portsmouth, Rhode Island
Budget Hearing
Report to Taxpayers on the Current and Proposed Budget**

	Approved for Budget Year Operating/Capital FY2020-2021	Proposed Budget Year Operating/Capital FY2021-2022
General Fund		
<i>General Fund Expenses</i>		
Education	\$ 38,416,740	\$ 39,167,388
School Debt Service (funded by Town)	566,152	546,404
Town Council	11,366	10,866
Town Administrator	309,725	303,796
Administrative Services	4,717,463	4,935,892
Town Debt Service	2,029,404	1,556,747
Planning & Development	799,962	826,584
Public Safety	14,042,897	15,688,790
Public Works Department	3,092,610	3,327,079
Parks, Recreation & Community Services	1,258,787	1,396,057
Transfers out to other funds	1,362,865	1,314,972
<i>General Fund Expenses Total \$</i>	<i>66,607,971 \$</i>	<i>69,074,575</i>
 <i>General Fund Revenues</i>		
Local Property Tax	\$ 57,505,015	\$ 59,049,037
Local Non-Property Tax	3,363,183	4,217,776
Federal	-	-
State	5,739,773	5,807,762
<i>General Fund Revenues Total \$</i>	<i>66,607,971 \$</i>	<i>69,074,575</i>

Transfer Station Fund

<i>Transfer Station Expenses</i>		
Operations	\$ 715,963	\$ 648,545
Bond Debt Service	22,101	22,101
<i>Transfer Station Expenses Total \$</i>	<i>738,064 \$</i>	<i>670,646</i>
 <i>Transfer Station Income</i>		
Income	727,553	749,945
<i>Transfer Station Income Total \$</i>	<i>727,553 \$</i>	<i>749,945</i>

The Town of Portsmouth Education expenditure for the 2021-2022 budget year is \$39,167,388. This is an increase of \$550,648. Below is a Comparison Summary For Educational Expenditures With Prior Year Budget and Current Proposed Budget.

	Approved for Current Year Operating/Capital FY2020-2021	Proposed Budget Year Operating/Capital FY2021-2022	Increase (Decrease)	
Town of Portsmouth School Funding Summary				
Local Appropriations	\$ 34,570,876	\$ 35,493,987		
Health Care Reduction	-	(126,806)		
Total Town Appropriation	\$ 34,570,876	\$ 35,367,181	796,305	2.30%
State Aid				
State Aid-General Funding	3,845,864	3,800,207	(45,657)	-1.19%
Total State Aid	\$ 3,845,864	\$ 3,800,207		
Total Appropriation Before Capital	\$ 38,416,740	\$ 39,167,388		
School Capital	200,000	-	(200,000)	-100.00%
Total School Capital	200,000	-		
Total Town and State Funding	\$ 38,616,740	\$ 39,167,388	550,648	1.43%

Copies of the Proposed 2021-2022 Budget will be available June 10, 2021 online and at the Portsmouth Town Hall, 2200 East Main Road, at the Town Clerk's Office Monday through Friday during Town Hall operation hours.

The public is welcome to attend any meeting of the Town's boards or its committees. If communication assistance

(readers / interpreters/ captions) is needed or any other accommodations to ensure equal participation, please contact the Town Clerk's Office at 401-683-2101 at least three (3) business days prior to the meeting.

This is to certify that the data contained in this report is correct to the best of my knowledge.

Kevin M Aguiar
Town Council President

FUTURE MEETINGS

Jun 14 7:00 PM – Town Council Meeting
Jun 28 7:00 PM – Town Council Meeting
Jul 12 7:00 PM – Town Council Meeting

ADJOURN – Motion to adjourn made by Mr. Hamilton, seconded by Mr. Kelly. Motion passed 7-0.

Time: 8:47 PM

Jennifer M. West, Town Clerk