

APPROVED MINUTES of the City Council
Budget Workshop of the City Council of the
City of Rye held on November 19, 2007 at
7:00 P.M.

PRESENT:

STEVEN OTIS, Mayor
ANDREW C. BALL
MACK CUNNINGHAM
MATTHEW FAHEY
DUNCAN HENNES (departed at 8:35)
GEORGE PRATT (arrived at 7:35)
HOWARD G. SEITZ (arrived at 7:20)
Councilmen

ABSENT: None

1. Pledge of Allegiance

Mayor Otis called the meeting to order and invited the Council to join in the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. Roll Call

Mayor Otis asked the City Clerk to call the roll; a quorum was present to conduct official city business.

3. Continued Discussion of 2008 Budget

City Manager Paul Shew said this evening's workshop would concentrate on the Rye Golf Club Enterprise Fund and on public safety (Police and Fire Departments).

Rye Golf Club. City Manager Paul Shew said the Golf Club presentation would discuss the new membership category, governance and the Rye Golf Club as a whole. Hi introduced Club Manager Scott Yandrasevich who made the following presentation.

- *New Social Membership Category.* Last year's Social Membership Category has been revised to reflect some of the desires of Senior Citizens wishing a more economical way to use the Club on a limited basis. The proposed new membership is for anyone over 18; Resident fee is \$75; Non-Resident fee is \$250; use of the club (without combining uses) is 14 times between May 1 and September 30, limited to once a week. Number of golf rounds is 10 @\$50 per

round. (for example, golf 10 times; pool 4 times). No guests. John Carolin, who has been championing this type of membership, asked the Commission to lower the \$50 rate to \$40, but it was felt this was a trial membership and it should stay at \$50. It remains to be seen how many members will take advantage of this membership rate and how the bottom line will be affected. The Commission was congratulated for solving this vexing membership issue.

- *Governance.* Mr. Yandrasevich said the Commission has updated the 1988 Resolution for the Council’s consideration. The document has been fully vetted by both the Commission and the Corporation Counsel and now needs to be approved by the Council.
- *2008 Budget.* Mr. Yandrasevich said it was important to look at the budget as a whole. Not every “department” of a club can be, or is meant to be, profitable. What is important is the bottom line. He said he expects that the club will, at the very worst, break even this year. The Castle operations for 2007 show a loss, but major repairs were necessary (many [floors, carpeting, windows, equipment] have been completed). They have already booked over \$325,000 worth of business through the end of the year. He said the facility can only handle just so much, but it is good that the number of special events is growing. He said it was possible that they will have to limit the hours during the quieter times. The members feel more connected; membership is growing; and on the whole the Club is doing fine. Membership dues will go up 4% (last year was the same; the year before was 3%). The Mayor commended him on better ambiance, and better membership use, but wanted to know how much the Club has ‘in the bank’ to pay down the debt this year vs. last year. Councilman Cunningham wanted to know the financial implications to the Club by having the Grounds Supervisor live at the Rye Nature Center. Councilman Pratt wants a breakdown of materials and supplies and contractual costs.

Police Department. City Manager Paul Shew reported that the long-awaited renovations to the Police Building are completed, that close attention had been paid to overtime, and the department is increasingly involved with public service (such as walks, triathlons, etc) which are a healthy and good use of time. Commissioner Connors said he was available to answer any questions.

- *Staffing.* He said 45 people are authorized, but 44 are filled. Three members are on Long Term Disability. All have filed for Disability retirement and awaiting approval from the State Board. He is hiring one new person as of December 3 (a transfer from Maybrook). Councilman Pratt asked when the City had last evaluated staffing indicating in his business (the financial, for-profit sector) it is done every year. Mr. Shew said no official analysis of staffing has been done recently, but mentioned the City as a whole is well under usual levels for a community of this size and suspected a formal analysis could show the City is under-staffed in some areas. Councilman Seitz said an analysis wasn’t a bad idea, but it should be done during the year when it can be carefully thought out and incorporated in the budget before it is presented to the Council, if changes are necessary.

- *Vehicles.* A discussion of the vehicle replacement policy took place. The department purchased four in 2007 and has requested four more in 2008, according to the new replacement policy (seven years/70,000 miles for unmarked cars; 2 years for marked cars). He pointed to some of the new innovations in police car lighting, etc.
- *Police Impound.* Why haven't we done it? We tried to put it by the tennis courts at Disbrow Park, but it was too close to the neighbors. Now we are exploring collaboration with the County to use the old compactor and share the space. Do we need it? Not totally every day, but you never know when you will have evidence that needs to be impounded. It can be used all the time to store many police items now in less accessible storage space.
- *Police Boat.* The Glacier Bay needs new engines, currently out for a second round of bids. The Boston Whaler is shot and needs replacement.
- *Mooring Fees.* The revenue is in the General fund, not dedicated to enforcement, but it is a cooperative effort. The Council wants a report and wants to know more about non-compliance.
- *Parking outside the Police Station.* Now that the renovations are completed, will the commuters get the parking spaces back? The Police Department would like to keep the space, but staff will look into this.

Fire Department. City Manager Shew reported the department has done well recruiting volunteers; the Locust Avenue renovations are done and the second floor has become a secondary EOC. Chiefs Wickham and Cotter presented a wish list to the Council, including two rescue boats (inflatable (\$1250 for the boat, \$1440 for the engine); new lights for a fire truck (the ones they have apparently burn out in the heat); turnout gear (\$2309 per outfit for 11 new people); computers for the fire trucks.) New volunteers have joined because of active campaigning and include women. There was no discussion of staffing.

Other Budget Considerations. Councilman Hennes said he would like to see the budget increase no higher than the CPI which, from September to September was 2.1%, so he inquired about the impact of the proposed personnel changes (adding a person to the DPW for the Central Business District, help in Engineering Department and the new Environment Coordinator). Mr. Shew said he was working on revisions to this plan to explore ways of lowering the personnel costs (a service contract with the CBD; part-time help in land use and ways to find a person with both engineering and naturalist skills (a difficult combination). Councilman Pratt suggested a matrix. Councilman Seitz wants a comparison of parking fines in neighboring communities.

Councilman Cunningham asked about the plan for the old CVS building. Mr. Shew said the staff has advocated bonding for its purchase now, but the Mayor said he would oppose asking for funds before having a plan and the public is less likely to approve the purchase if there is no plan. He said there needs to be a workshop to set a course for analysis on what needs to be done.

Councilman Pratt warned the Council and Staff that 66% of Rye's population is susceptible to a Wall Street slowdown which is coming to Rye and the hard times will be just like 1988.

Next workshop. Monday, November 26 at 7:00 P.M.

Mayor Otis made a motion, seconded by Councilman Seitz to adjourn to Executive Session at 9:40 P.M. to discuss three matters relating to real estate and litigation. No decisions were reached. Councilman Ball made a motion, seconded by Councilman Fahey to close the Executive Session at 10:37 P.M.

4. **Adjournment**

There being no further business to be discussed, Mayor Otis made a motion, unanimously carried, to adjourn the Budget Workshop at 10:38 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Morison
City Clerk