

APPROVED MINUTES of the Budget
Workshop of the City Council of the City of Rye held
in City Hall on November 16, 2009 at 7:00 P.M.

PRESENT:

STEVEN OTIS, Mayor
ANDREW C. BALL
MACK CUNNINGHAM
PAULA J. GAMACHE
CATHERINE F. PARKER (Arrived at 7:10 p.m.)
GEORGE S. PRATT
JOSEPH A. SACK
Councilmembers

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. Presentation and discussion on Roof Replacement Project for Tower Building at Rye Town Park

Mayor Otis said that Lisa Easton, the project architect, would be making the presentation and no vote would be taken by the Council at this meeting. He noted that several years ago the Pavilions at Rye Town Park were redone at the expense of Seaside Johnnies Restaurant as part of the expense of a lease extension. The roof on the Administration Building or Tower Building is in worse condition and has been leaking for about 20 years. In 2003 the Rye Town Park Commission commissioned a study to evaluate the building for uses and repairs. Lisa Easton did that study. What is before the Council and Town of Rye at this point is just to fix the roof. Two grants were obtained in 2004 and 2005 for about \$398,000 towards the rehabilitation.

Lisa Easton said she was a Preservation Architect who had been involved with Rye Town Park for eight years and had helped to get the property listed on the State National Register in 2002, which opened up funding options for the park. The park consists of 28 acres; the beachfront is 34 acres and there are 17 buildings in the park. She utilized a slide presentation to show the deterioration in the Main Administration Building from 2003 to the present. There has been little maintenance to the building over the years and water has infiltrated the building primarily through the roof and the stucco. She likened the building to a sponge, absorbing water over the years that is now affecting its structure. The building has ten roofs, six are tiled and the

remainder are flat roofs. Many of the tiles have slid off, which is a life/safety hazard. The structure under the tiles is in relatively good shape, but if the problem is not addressed soon, its structure will be impaired and not worth salvaging. The Rye Town Park Commission tried to get money through grants using the historic significance of the building and ran a private fund-raising campaign which yielded over \$435,000 in contributed dollars toward the project. The feasibility study looked at all the problems in the building and prioritized them in order to determine how the building could be viably used to get a tenant that would generate income. Design documents went out to bid according to state and federal guidelines. The lowest bidder has been approved in terms of doing the work if the project goes forward. The balance of the work must now be funded.

Mayor Otis said it had been the assumption that bonded capital projects at the park were split 50/50 by the Town and City of Rye, but City Manager Frank Culross said the City's share is 39.52% based upon a 1953 statute. This means the City's share of the project will be approximately 40%. The project is expected to cost about \$1.4 million, minus \$400,000 in grants. The Town of Rye will be bonding about \$600,000 and the City about \$400,000. Councilman Cunningham, who represents the City on the Rye Town Park Commission along with Mayor Otis, said the project is time sensitive. The work should be done prior to the park opening in May and grant money must be drawn down prior to June 2010 or lost. If the grant money is lost, it will be more difficult to obtain other grant funding in the future. Mayor Otis said that if it was not for the potential loss of grant money, he would recommend putting off the project. City Manager Culross said that his understanding of how the process works is that the Rye Town Park Commission makes a determination of need, which is then taken to the two boards that are responsible for approving or disapproving the project. If they approve the project they are each responsible for providing a funding source to cover their share. If the City chooses to bond, those bonds are not subject to the other limitations in the Charter. He said it was his belief that the project should not have gone out to bid prior to this process.

Comments and questions from Council Members included:

- The Town of Rye should be asked to provide information about what the \$1.3 million project cost covers. (All of the roofing material. The bid came in October 26th and was broken down by roof and included all material and labor within each roof. There is no breakdown of labor to material.)
- The City Council should have a discussion and vote before the Town Park Commission meeting in order to give direction to the City of Rye representatives on how they wish them to vote on the need for the project.
- Why is there a discrepancy in the proposed cost of the project between memoranda from the former City Manager and current City Manager? (The quotes came in lower than anticipated.)
- Have last year's and this year's operational deficits for the park been figured out? (2009 deficit amount will be smaller than in last 10 years, possibly \$65,000. The 2007 financials remain in dispute.)
- In the past the City has opposed the Town of Rye bonding for projects in order to keep their spending under some control. The City wants the funds for this project to be segregated from the rest of the funds for the Town of Rye.

- Mayor Otis and Councilman Cunningham should tell the Town Park Commission not to award the bids before we receive more information on the project.
- How can the Town Park Commission award a contract when it does not have the money.
- When a building is on the National Register is there an obligation to use the same materials as originally used? (Not when private money is used, only when state and federal money is used.)
- Waiting to approve the project would mean the loss of grant money and more damage to the property, which would increase the cost of the project.
- If the bid is awarded and either of the two municipalities decides not to fund it, is anyone on the hook for the money? (No, because contracts have not been awarded.)
- How many bids were there and what was the spread of the high to low bids? (Four contractors submitted bids. The difference between the high and low bids was about \$1 million. The high bid was twice the low bid and the spread between 1, 2 and 3 was roughly \$125,000.)
- What is the usable square footage of the building? (Approximately 4,500 or 4,600 square feet.) How much of the building is usable? (The entire building, but it is primarily being used for storage. An enclosed building that is no longer leaking would be more appealing to a potential tenant.)

4. Continuation of Budget Workshops on Proposed 2010 Budget

The discussion at this workshop covered the Police Department, Fire Department and Recreation Department.

Police Department

Commissioner William Connors began his presentation by offering a note of appreciation to Gail Klepps, who retired this year after 35 years of service to the Department and had prepared the Department budgets for most of that time, and to Police Officer David Rivera, who is a trained accountant and has helped with the preparation of the 2010 budget. He said the theme of budgeting for the Police Department was to prepare for the possibilities while budgeting for the probabilities and ask for what is necessary to accomplish the mission. In the non-personnel area there is only one big ticket item for 2010, the replacement of body armor, which is replaced in five-year cycles. On the technology side, there are two large items, the replacement of mobile computers and replacement of servers necessary to implement data storage requirements. The Commissioner said that the staffing mission includes providing adequate patrol coverage, desk coverage, proper supervision, response to emergencies, policing special events, conducting investigations, enforcement initiatives and dealing with crime. Specialized responsibilities include Village patrol, Youth liaison; DARE, Marine Patrol, traffic enforcement; counter terrorism and victim assistance. The Back Office operation includes technology, scheduling, training, community relations, records management, community relations, arrest processing, evidence management, equipment maintenance, accreditation and NIMS. He said there has been criticism that 25 members of the Department earned over \$100,000 due to overtime, but 11 of those employees' base salary is at least \$100,000 and others are close to that figure. Additional compensation for all salaries comes from holiday pay, longevity and uniform allowance. He gave an overview of department staffing numbers (3

Lieutenants, 7 Sergeants, 3 Detectives, 26 Officers, which includes 2 on extended sick leave and one vacancy) and how they will be utilized to cover shifts in 2010, with the goal being to maintain service levels in current budget conditions. All midnight shifts will be filled and there is one vacancy in each of the rotating squads. The goal is to maintain service levels in a tight budget. Staffing levels are adequate to accomplish the mission but the department is virtually never fully staffed. Vacancies in the squads are frequently filled by those assigned to the Village, Marine and traffic enforcement Units in order to reduce overtime. He added that reduced staffing limits the availability for proactive enforcement. The Commissioner said that 2009 overtime figures to date are 4.79% of the budget, which is below 2008 and below the current budget. This is due to increased staff availability, careful monitoring and management and limited weather, operational events and crime patterns. He said that in the last eight or nine years the general range of police overtime has been between 5% and 6%, and in police departments a range of 5% to 10% is considered doing well. Some overtime is covered by grants; reimbursement for special event coverage, agreements and back fill from workers' compensation and 207(c) sick leave and vacation leave. He said that in the past the policy has been not to seek reimbursement from the special events and walks but going forward it may be time to reevaluate the policy. Some situations require automatic overtime but all other occasions require approval by a lieutenant and all submissions for overtime are reviewed by a lieutenant and the Commissioner. The assignment of overtime is covered by work rules that were established through negotiations and all members of the Department, except the Commissioner, are eligible for overtime. He concluded by saying the Department is composed of dedicated and professional men and women who will adjust in these extraordinary economic time and continue to provide the highest level of service to the community.

Council comment and questions included:

- Part of the new Council's orientation should include an explanation of how contracts work.
- Would the increased revenue generated from an additional Parking Enforcement Officer (PEO) offset the expense of an additional employee? (There is not necessarily a down side to the idea because, ideally, the position should be self-funding. Sometimes increased enforcement equals more compliance, which could mean the position would not be self-funding. Another PEO could also help with the increased demand for school crossings.)
- Should the City look at a shared services agreement with Mamaroneck for the Marine Unit? Could Bay Constables hired by the City be supervised by Mamaroneck? (With grant funding the unit has been a bargain, but if the funding is lost, the City should look at sharing the service.)
- The City probably has more special events and walkathons because of its proximity to Playland and the beach. Is there a written policy about seeking reimbursement for these events? (There is no written policy. Charitable events were just covered. The policy decision would be how are reimbursable events determined -- local community events vs. outside events; single merchant events vs. general Chamber of Commerce events. With new events, they are trying to push for reimbursement.) The Council should have a discussion about establishing a new policy.

- How are squads assigned? (By strict rotation. Officers can volunteer for steady midnights and if there is not a sufficient amount the slots are filled by reverse seniority. The other squads are filled with strict seniority rotation. Special assignments are selected by management.)
- What is the percentage of reimbursement by utility companies for police overtime? (100% of overtime.)
- More overtime hours should go towards traffic enforcement in the hour prior to the 8:00 a.m. shift
- Were there more calls received in connection with the leaf blower law and has there been any improvement in compliance? (There were more complaints in the beginning, but more compliance as the summer went on. Currently, now that leaf blowers are allowed to be used, complaints about use of multiple blowers are increasing.)

Fire Department

Chiefs Hogben and Scarfone represented the volunteer Department and Lt. Dianni and Firefighters McDwyre and Northshield represented the career Department.

Chief Hogben said the Department operates out of two stations (Locust and Milton) and is a combination department staffed by career firefighters (17) and volunteers (100 on the rolls with 25-30 active). There are three volunteer chiefs who run the department along with Lt. Dianni. There are 12 pieces of equipment. The department responded to 854 alarms in 2008 and 724 to date this year. He said they will do their best to maintain their budget. Firefighter McDwyre said that the department is buying small quantities of big ticket items, such as turn out gear, annually rather in large numbers in five year increments. Lt. Dianni noted that the second biggest line item in the budget is for fire hydrant rental, which is set by the water company. Overtime at the Fire Department is similar to the Police Department. There are four groups of four fighters and the lieutenant. At most times there is one person off in each group which incurs an overtime situation. There is only one person on each fire truck so that must be covered. The Department also must be prepared for emergencies, so people are brought in on overtime in anticipation of that need. All overtime stems from lack of staffing based on sickness, contractual personal days, State mandated training and storms. It usually runs about 10% to 11% of the budget, but is below that so far this year due to a lack of storms.

Council questions and comments included:

- Is there any way to reduce the number of false alarms and reduce costs? (A minimum requirement of apparatus is required to respond to a call in order to maintain the ISO rating. The cost incurred by reducing this rating would exceed any savings.)
- The suggestion to charge for a second false alarm that is proposed in the budget is a good idea.
- The incoming Counsel should be familiarized with the ISO rating and how it works.
- Department revenue is up significantly from 2008 in the area of fire inspections. (These are yearly inspections that were not charged for prior to 2002. More inspections are being done, the fees are being broken down more to charge multiple tenants in a building and a fee increase is included for next year.)

- It may be time to talk to the County about an IMA to provide reimbursement for coverage to Playland.
- Where is the volunteer budget included in the budget? (It is part of the operation budget.)
- The volunteer chiefs are given vehicles that give them the tools to do their jobs.
- Thanks to Lt. Dianni for working with the residents on Hen Island to identify problems and working with them to improve safety.

Recreation

Recreation Superintendent Sally Rogol said the Department offers a comprehensive array of services from pre-school age to seniors. It is staffed by nine full-time employees and supplemented by part-timers and seasonal help. The services continue to evolve and change with the community. The department strives to return 40% of its operational budget through fees and charges.

Council comments and questions included:

- Was camp enrollment up or down in 2008? (The numbers decreased with more people looking for assistance through scholarships. It was also more difficult for the Department to find donations from organizations to pay for the scholarships and a sliding scale was used in some instances.)
- The Department provides great value for seniors in their programs. (The senior program covers about 7% of its costs. A part-time employee runs the program and there are approximately 50 programs run for seniors.)
- Have picnic rentals gone down with the economy? (Yes. Last year the user fees were reorganized from seven to three schedules and the trend is down in all areas.)
- Is the \$146,000 for Damiano improvements part of the original bond referendum?
- Could a surveillance camera be added to the Gagliardo storage facility renovations to deal with possible vandalism concerns? (Staff can go back and reevaluate the need because problem areas tend to shift.)
- Is the Gagliardo project the wisest expenditure of money that might be needed more at another facility in the future? (The new proposal is to find a vandalism proof type building that will allow it to be more open to residents on a day-to-day basis. The Recreation Commission can always go back and reevaluate and prioritize projects.)
- The Gagliardo project should go ahead if at all possible because the facility is the epicenter to the location and is currently substandard. (The money proposed for this project is from the 2003 bond issue and there are limited alternative uses for the money.)
- Will there be a grant for Senior golf next year? (The one \$500 grant that was received is not renewable but the program brought in more in fees than the 40% recovery rate, so the Commission would like to see it continue.)
- Since non-residents in the camp are charged twice the resident fee, how many use the camp? (Maybe a dozen. Some go to Rye schools, some are children of people who work in Rye and some are looking for a full-day kindergarten program.) Does the Department seek out non-residents? (The primary focus is on residents.)
- How many seniors participate in programs? (There are currently 313 senior members, but the amount fluctuates. The program starts at age 60 and the oldest participant is 102.)

They meet every Wednesday from September to June and there are many special interest groups.)

- How are they charged? (The seniors have their own club and certain things are paid through their dues. Program fees are kept low to allow for more participation. Core program registration is three times a year. Newer programs have higher fees because they have outside instructors.)

Arthur Stampleman said that the budget document does not indicate that the Recreation Department covers 40% of its costs. Ms. Rogol said that the Department budget is made up of 10 cost centers but only eight are included as part of the recovery.

5. Adjournment

There being no further business to discuss, Mayor Otis made a motion, seconded by Councilman Cunningham and unanimously carried, to adjourn the meeting at 10:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Dawn F. Nodarse
City Clerk