

The second public hearing for the 2008-2009 Fiscal Year was held May 12, 2008, at 7:02 PM in Council Chambers. Present at the start of the public hearing: Ald. Coutu, Desaulniers, Jacaruso, Nash and Mayor Lathrop. City Manager Bergren and Corporation Counsel Driscoll were also in attendance. Ald. Bettencourt arrived at 7:13 PM.

Cathy Zeiner, 225 Main Street, Executive Director of the Woman's Center of Southeastern Connecticut, spoke in support of additional funding for a police officer to serve on a domestic violence team. She said they have been in partnership with the Norwich Police Department since 2004 and a program has served more than 450 victims of domestic violence every year.

Pamela Aubin, 30 Wightman Avenue, Superintendent of Schools, spoke in support of the 5.3% budget for the Norwich Public Schools and urged them to reinstate the \$500,000 proposed cut. This cut would cause the elimination of certified staff positions including Art and PE, an elementary teacher at Huntington Elementary School and salaries for custodians which helps to keep the buildings open.

Janis Sawicki, 39 Andrea Lane, Principal of Stanton School, spoke in support of the funding for the Board of Education.

Thom Keaney, 12 Ledgewood Court, spoke on behalf of the Norwich Arts Council and other entertainment venues in the city and hoped the Council would continue to support them in the budget.

Ald. Betterncourt then arrived at 7:13 PM.

Joanne Philbrick, 10 Elm Avenue, asked for the Council's support by lowering taxes. She said duties could be consolidated, or a tax freeze could be established. She also suggested the Parks Department could handle the grub problem on the Norwichtown Green, instead of paying a company over \$6,000.

Andy Depta, 105 Vergason Avenue, said he agreed with the previous speaker. He also said he looked at the goals and accomplishments for each department in the budget and the goals don't match up with the accomplishments.

Abby Dolliver, 6 Deepwood Drive, said one way to attract people to the City of Norwich is by a good educational system. Ms. Dolliver asked the Council to reinstate the funding for the school budget.

Keith Ripley, Meadow Lane, asked the Council to look carefully at the items that shouldn't be cut, because the result could be more costly later. Mr. Ripley asked the Council to focus on what would happen if the board of education budget was cut, because it would be the children that would loose. Mr. Ripley also asked for a new line item to be added to support sidewalks in the front of the Briar Hill Plaza.

Dawn Hooper, 413 Boswell Avenue, asked the Council to reinstate the funding for the Board of Education. She said the potential cut in the after school programs would be harmful in the future.

David Crabb, 47 Prospect Street, encouraged the Council to continue the cuts mentioned at the last meeting. He also felt the Economic Development should be consolidated with the Sachem Fund.

Erin Lancey, 60 Clearview Drive, said her children are her first priority and urged the Council to reinstate funding for the Board of Education.

Elizabeth Hanlon, 9 Caulkins Road, also supported the Board of Education budget and she asked the Council to reinstate the funding to them.

Debbie Kievits, 252 Old Canterbury Tpke, spoke in support of the Police Department's request for the dispatcher officer and the domestic violence person.

John Blackburn, 15 Alice, Street, said everyone has to live within their means, and it seems the students are being put against the elderly.

Kim Dees, 37 Rogers Avenue, asked the Council to put back the funding for the Board of Education because without proper education for the children there is no future for them.

Peter Szydlo, North Third Avenue, said he is a senior citizen, and one third of his income goes for taxes and insurances. He said even if we have a 0% increase, we might still be ahead of the game. Mr. Szydlo said police and fire protection are an absolute necessity, but after school programs won't get the students good jobs.

Mary Nasi, 138 North Wawecus Hill Road, asked the Council to reinstate the education budget. She said the real estate values would also be affected because families won't want to relocate to Norwich if our school system is not adequate.

Heidi Autio, 158 Cliff Street, said the services provided through the Board of Education are important to the community, and if their budget is reduced, families will relocate to other areas.

Sheila Hayes, Pin Oak Terrace, said she was opposed to any reductions that would affect children and their welfare.

Cora Lee Boulware, 385 New London Tpke., said the City has an obligation to provide a good education to the students and she hoped the Council would reinstate funding to the Board of Education.

There being no further speakers, Mayor Lathrop declared the public hearing closed at 7:54 PM.

ATTEST:



CITY CLERK