

**MONROE TOWN COUNCIL  
Monroe, Connecticut**

**FIRST SELECTMAN  
PROPOSED 2016-2017 BUDGET PRESENTATION  
PUBLIC HEARING  
February 9, 2016  
Town Hall Council Chambers  
Monroe, CT**

A Public Hearing on the Proposed 2016-2017 Town of Monroe Annual Budget was held on Tuesday, February 9, 2016 at 7:00 p.m. at the Town Hall Council Chambers, located at 7 Fan Hill Road, Monroe, Connecticut. The purpose for this hearing is to receive input from the public regarding the Proposed 2016-2017 Town of Monroe Annual Budget.

**PRESENT:** Chairman Frank Lieto  
Vice-Chairman Enid Lipeles  
Councilmember Nicholas Kapoor  
Councilmember Kenneth Kellogg  
Councilmember Dee Dee Martin  
Councilmember Sean O'Rourke  
Councilmember Kevin Reid  
Councilmember Terry Rooney

**ABSENT:** First Selectman Stephen J. Vavrek  
Councilmember Phyllis Kansky

*Chairman Frank Lieto* called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. on the 2016-2017 Proposed 2016-2017 Budget Presentation. He noted the meeting was closed on Monday, February 8, 2016 due to inclement weather and is now scheduled for today, February 9, 2016. First Selectman, Stephen J. Vavrek was not present to do the presentation due to an illness. Speaking on behalf of the First Selectman will be Ron Bunovsky, Director of Finance. Speaking on Education will be James Agostine, Superintendent of Schools.

**Ron Bunovsky** presented a slide show regarding Monroe's achievements consisting of road upgrades, advanced excellence in education, reinvested resources into town, Board of Education buildings, and formed a new Health Department. He noted the priorities are the cultural, educational, health and safety needs of our residents must be addressed, stating we have provided for them in a fiscally responsible manner by continuing our investment in infrastructure; keeping our commitment to excellence in education, making advances to our emergency service, upgrading our technology and security throughout the town, evaluating the programs and services we offer, and improving upon the fiscal health of the town. He presented a slide on the budget considerations such as the struggling economy in the state and its potential impact on municipal aid, the high cost of

health insurance, federal and state unfunded mandates, maintaining the town's Aa2 bond rating with a strong General Fund. Mr. Bunovsky presented a slide on the town revenue consisting of the town revenue budget summary, the current budget, the First Selectman's proposed budget, the dollar change, and the percentage change. He presented a slide on the town expenditures = \$85,474,955 for 2016-2017 and a slide on the distribution of expenditures by function for the town. Mr. Bunovsky presented a summary of municipal operations expenditure budget, debt service, long term bonded debt and capital leases (a chart), reserves funding, approved expenditures budget percentage change and a 2016-2017 budget overview. He stated this proposed increase in spending of 2.18% and tax revenue of 2.78% keeps us on the right track of providing a safe community, improving our roads, educating our children, and maintaining our parks.

First Selectman Stephen J. Vavrek submitted to the Town Council \$85.4 million in expenditures, a 1.69% increase from the current year's \$84 million. About 64% of the budget, \$54.8 million is allocated to the school system. The school budget is about 1.96% higher than the current year's budget. Funding the budget will require a 3.21% increase in the town's property tax rate, though that is offset slightly by the state mandated reduction in vehicle taxes. The current mill rate is 34.35. The First Selectman is proposing a 35.45 real estate mill rate, and the tax rate on vehicles is set at the state limit of 32.

## **SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS**

**James Agostine**, Superintendent of Monroe Schools also presented a slide show of the proposed 2016-2017 Budget. He started his presentation with the mission of the Monroe Public Schools: to ensure that all students reach their full potential as innovative thinkers and responsible citizens through a challenging, inquiry-based curriculum delivered by skilled, dedicated, and engaging educators. He noted budget goals are educational goals and fiscal goals. The parameters to guide the budget process is to seek funds to support our mission and vision, where class size matters, core academics programming is supported by elective and co-curricular programs, and budget reductions, if necessary. He presented slides on budget assumptions, budget overview, with a change of 1.96% increase. Mr. Agostine also presented a summary by expense category, in-district enrollment patterns, comparison of classroom teacher levels to student population, the change in teaching staff -47.45. He presented a slide on comparison of certified teaching staff to student population, comparison of non-certified staff to student population, and cost avoidance due to teacher RIFs, and enrollment. Mr. Agostine stated the risks to the budget consist of a decrease in state and federal funding/governor's budget cut, unanticipated special education costs in excess of \$50,000; unfunded mandates, unanticipated maintenance/emergency repair costs; unsuccessful bonding for oil tank replacements. The proposed budget provides support for all students in meeting the Connecticut core standards, provides adequate maintenance of all school buildings, and provides teacher training in all district initiatives. In conclusion, a slide on the budget revenue sources, 5 year capital needs projection, and equipment replacement plan were also presented. Mr. Agostine stated he had originally presented a budget to the school board that contained a 2.43% increase. Through a series of meetings, he and the board

finalized it at 1.96%. He noted how hard they worked to get to 1.96%, especially with that increase coming on the heels of some years of zero.

### **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

*Steve Kirsch, 35 Applegate Lane* had a question on how much is being planned to bond on this budget for roads as he noticed the plan for operating budget for roads seems flat this year. Ron Bunovsky stated it was a zero (0) bond. He noted at the Board Of Finance budget workshop last year, it was cut from \$800,000 to \$500,000 and it appears it's at the same level and he is quite concerned about this.

*Debra Dutches, 15 Heartstone Road* had a question regarding the slide on the debt service of \$409,400 for the roof repairs done, and she wanted to know why it was reflected in last year's budget and not this year's budget. She also had questions on the educational budget and if they considered using oil instead of gas. James Agostine noted that Honeywell is doing all the calculations and there is a strong possibility that oil may be used next year.

Councilmembers had all questions answered during the presentation.

Chairman Lieto thanked Ron Bunovsky and James Agostine for their presentations and noted the budget meeting tonight will be uploaded on the website.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

**Motion: (E. Lipeles)**

There being no further questions, Town Council Chairman, Frank Lieto adjourned the meeting at 8:15 p.m.

**Second: (K. Reid)**

**Motion passes 8-0**

Respectfully submitted,

Donna Cerreta  
Town Council Clerk