

**TOWN OF MENASHA
PUBLIC HEARING OF THE PROPOSED 2009 BUDGET
Municipal Complex - Assembly Room - Monday, November 17, 2008**

Minutes

1. Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance

Town Chairman Arden Tews called the Public Hearing to order at 6:00 p.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Town Residents Present: Annette Look, Dennis Gerhart, Roger Clark, Barbara Hanson, Arden Tews, Jeff Sturgell, Mike Lynch, Jay Schroeder, Kate McQuillan, Dale Youngquist, Barb Knaack, Pat Dobberke, Joe Nemecek, Greg Ziegler, Randy Gallow, Josh Woodside, Keith Kiesow, Rod McCants, Paul Eisen, Melvin Schultz, Dale McNamee, and Dale Knaack.

Non-Residents Present: Myra Piergrossi, Steve Laabs, Karen Backman, Joan Burrill, Tim Plagenz, Peter Adams, Lucas Telfer, Mike Kading, Jeff Roth, George Dearborn, and Mike Kemmeter

2. Introduction of Town Board Members and Town Staff

Chairman Tews introduced the Town of Menasha elected officials followed by the Town staff.

3. Review of the Proposed 2009 Budgets of the Town of Menasha and Utility District

Chairman Tews presented a PowerPoint overview of the proposed Town of Menasha and Utility District budgets in depth. (See attached). Highlights in the 2009 Town's budget: major revenue decreases and major revenue increases resulted in a net revenue of \$86,804, half as much as last year; major expenditures increased in road resurfacing, fuel costs, capital equipment fund, health insurance, street lighting, salt & chips for a total in major expenditures of \$450,347. The Town is currently at a 2% levy limit. Use of fund balance should be within 10% of our budget; the estimated fund balance on 12/31/09 is 10.31%. Highway project costs and other capital projects were reviewed for 2009.

In the 2009 water and sewer budgets highlights were; a June 2008 water rate increase was seen, cost of salt increased, meter maintenance increased, depreciation funding, debt service increased, and 15% decrease in water purchased from Menasha. With Well #7 on University Dr. in operation next year, two wells will provide water on the east side. Chairman Tews stated some water increases are seen due to aggressively replacing water lines, and there's been an extreme reduction in water main breaks. Capital projects including the utility costs were reviewed. A sewer rate increase is proposed beginning July 15, 2009 with a rate of 7.5%.

Board members discussed their conclusions as they went through the budget. All Board members thanked the department heads and staff for their work and efforts. Supervisor Gerhart realizes the difficulty of the budget given the economy and at the same time recognizes the desire of residents not to cut services. He explained our concerns with the infrastructure (roads), and stated the amount of deterioration currently exceeds what's expended to repair them so the board had to look hard and made concessions. He stated the road projects must be aggressive in the future and this is the first step toward that goal. Supervisor Hanson explained to residents that the Administrator and Finance Director reduced the budget and then went back and cut out more; even before going to the Board. She questioned whether we can place a cap on our interest rates and stated we must be cautious. Supervisor Ziegler stated major cuts could be a concern in the future. DNR mandates and our stand as a government body may help to approach the department on these requirements. Supervisor Youngquist agreed with Board members overall and stated as we sit with a general fund of just over 10%, may potentially have to cut some services in the future. He further stated with the need to complete our road projects, the Town may have to go to a referendum in the Fall one year from now.

Chairman Tews noted prior to receiving the budget, 73 budget cuts had been made and additionally, the Town Board made 17 changes which he said puts it into perspective. He thanked Board and staff.

Res. Joe Nemecek, Susan Avenue: Stated oil and gas prices dropped so felt the projection budgeted for fuel costs and road resurfacing inaccurate; several other items in disagreement such as utility and sewer costs; suggested reducing Fritse Park project budget; discussed employee wages; fund balance; Town-owned land, and Town borrowing and suggested money is sitting, not being used. Several board members discussed. Finance Director Piergrossi responded by explaining how staff looked at budgeting for fuel taking into account prices change; stated wages were still in negotiation; noted WE Energies had a 20% increase projected for next year. Regarding money not being used, Director Piergrossi stated a balance offset is shown and on-hand funds are used prior to any borrowing. Mr. Nemecek commented about reducing the levy and cutting services but Administrator Sturgell asked which services would be given up. Discussion ensued.

Res. Dale McNamee, Whippletree Lane: Wants budget workshops televised; work on mandatory stormwater utility for revenue stream; glad of the increase in resurfacing fund and wants to be more aggressive on highways; need a sustainable program; suggested Town look at a business practice on a quarterly basis, though Administrator Sturgell stated we practice this currently; wants to see sewer projects planned further into the future.

Res. Josh Woodside, Lakeshore Drive: Discussed buying of fuel; our level of services; scale back regulations if cutting services; wants long term vision of scheduling road projects 30-50 years out; fuel back into general fund and reduce the fund by other means. Administrator Sturgell explained the street projects must align with utility projects. Comm. Dev. Dir. Dearborn explained a 20-year plan may be reasonable but long range plans 40 or 50 years out is not. Mr. Woodside also discussed the Town's use of solar panels to see a cost reduction for electricity.

Res. Jay Schroeder, N. Lake Street: Suggested fuel cost projections be listed by department; adjust our budget to the recession; address health care; televise budget workshops; discussed reducing firefighters' response time and lights/sirens installed on vehicles. Mr. McNamee stated as part of the record, that lights and sirens were not a recommendation from the Fire Dept. Ad-Hoc Committee.

Res. Kate McQuillan, Whippletree Lane: Spoke of impacts to the Town due to state mandates such as stormwater, stated we must manage with what we have and feels this budget will withstand. She said we will come back and we'll build again.

Res. Barb Knaack, Irish Road: Discussed DNR mandates for ponds; her water bill is still higher; discussed what residents are paying for employee's health insurance. Board members asked how they can be assured about being aware when costs go up, and Finance Director Piergrossi stated our ordinance, Chapter 16 aligns how transfers cannot occur without board approval and departments must stay within their budget.

4. Close the Public Hearing

At 8:32 p.m., Chairman Tews closed the Public Hearing.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Backman, Town Clerk