

MINUTES OF THE HEARINGS ON AUGUST 10, 1988 OF PROPOSED  
1988-89 BUDGET OF SAN ANSELMO

Mayor John Sharp convened the first session of a series of three public hearings on the 88-89 Budget at 7:00 p.m. with Councilmembers Chignell, Colteaux, Walsh and Zaharoff present.

OVERVIEW

Ernie Dickens, Town Administrator, presented an overview, the main points are that it is a status quo budget, which provides the minimum level of funding, no significant increases or decreases proposed. The capital reconstruction revenues come from state or federal governments and from carryover balances from three funds: the capital reconstruction fund and from transfers of the two storm funds of 1982 and 1986. Dickens recommended that surplus money of the storm funds be put into the general fund. The main point of this budget is, that the past policies of the Town be continued so that the Town Council has the time to make major decisions before next year's budget. Capital projects, mainly street projects and storm drains, have been put off for 10 years and a way must be found to get an annual program started. The existing revenue base and the existing level of services need to be changed by either major decreases in services or by a new revenue source which would require voter approval or some combination of the two factors. Dickens recommended these decisions not be made part of this budget process. The Town will need a great deal of citizen participation, such as a series of Town meetings on Town finances and services, or a public opinion survey, and possibly other ways. Education is needed for the public to have a working knowledge of the budget in order to make intelligent decisions.

Dickens advises the Town Council not to decide on the requests or pleas from department heads or the public until the end of the budget hearings.

Herman Kramer, 1 Allemand Place, read a letter addressed to the Town Council pointing out that in seven years, the Town's spending has increased by 70% (\$2,669,141 to \$4,531,081) most of it going into the bureaucracy of the Town and not enough into streets, sewers or buildings. Voters were asked twice to vote on tax increases (1979 and 1982) and the measures were defeated. He stated that it's time to put a sharp pencil to the budget. He would like a freeze of the high level of total compensation to Town Employees and wants the Town Council to bring the budget within the normal taxes (no tax increase battle) to provide money for badly needed repairs to Town Property.

GENERAL FUND REVENUES

Dickens gave an overview of the General Fund Revenues and explained the differences in taxes received.

Dickens presented a chart, which he thought Sarah Nome had referred to, that demonstrated cash reserve levels from the fiscal years 79-80 through 87-88. It indicates the months of cash flow problems, a consistent low level of reserves in the months of Oct and November (lowest \$100,000 ), periods when property taxes are not collected. Dickens would like to have the reserves never drop below \$500,000 in order to have money in cases of emergency and for increasing revenues by way of interest earned.

Various questions from Town Council concerning the General Fund Revenues were directed at Mr. Dickens who responded in kind. Mr. Kramer voiced the opinion that he preferred seeing Actual verses Estimate columns in the Proposed Budget.

## APPROPRIATIONS LIMIT

Dickens explained that the Town of San Anselmo was under appropriations limit by approximately \$300,000. There were no public comments on the appropriations limit.

Colteaux commented that the Budget was very easy to read and appreciated the language used. He commended Dickens for it.

## BUDGET NO. 414, SAN ANSELMO VOLUNTEER EFFORT (SAVE)

The budget for SAVE volunteer effort is virtually identical to last year's budget with the exception of allowance for attendance in the annual conference of the American Association of Volunteer Administrators. SAVE's request for secretarial support, an additional \$3000 was denied by Dickens.

Helen Cameron expressed appreciation for the Town Council's support for the last nine years. She listed the countless ways SAVE's efforts benefit San Anselmo's citizens, i.e. office clerical support to the Town Hall and the Library, creek cleanup several times a year; town beautification projects; past assistance for Town Council traffic study, open space research; accomplished an elaborate historical catalogue and inventory, and a parks inventory.

Bill Ollinger stressed the need for the Town support to pay an additional \$6,000 per year for SAVE's clerical help.

SAVE is demphasizing their coordination in special events projects and is spending their time to promote volunteerism for the Town, i.e. clerical help in the Public Works office, community education in disaster preparedness; working with the Chamber of Commerce and business community in welcoming new residents to Town; recruiting volunteers in working with the Library, recruiting adult offenders from the Courts System to do public works for the Town; and, working with High Schools in their efforts to give students the opportunity to do community work.

Herman Kramer expressed his annual opinion that SAVE should be run by volunteers who are not paid for by the Town.

Christine Cheplick, representing the Volunteer Center of Marin stressed that the strongest and most capable volunteer programs are those that have an employed coordinator. Marian Cowperthwaite concurred that a paid director is vital.

Libby Davis, a San Anselmo resident greatly supports SAVE's efforts in pulling the community together and channeling the people's creativity in improving the Town's character.

Marian Hall, Director of Development and Volunteers of the Sunnyhills Children's Center commented that SAVE is a very professional organization and only a paid coordinator could achieve success.

## BUDGET NO. 471, LIBRARY

Budget has not changed from last year's. The Library Services Committee is currently studying what the library's long term needs are. Eliza Wingate, the Town Librarian stressed that major changes are needed to revamp the library; i.e. shelves need to be braced in case of earthquakes, air circulation needs improvement; building needs to be heated in the winter months, etc. Canny Barrows, President of the Friends of the Library, pointed out that the price of books has increased by 7% or 8% and that \$1000 cutback hurts the library and urged that surplus money go to books. Edith Stump, Library Advisory Boardmember concurred.

BUDGET NO. 483, RECREATION PROGRAMS

Budget is funded directly from recreation fees which are listed in more detail this year. Dickens recommends increasing fees and the long term goal should be to make the Recreation Department totally self-sufficient and not rely on the Town's General Fund. He also recommends use of the a carry-over in the Recreation Fund. The carry-over is \$7,100 less than shown in the budget.

Gary Howell, Recreation Director said the Department is raising fees but they can't be increased much more as parents wouldn't be able to afford to enroll their children. He prefers to keep the kids off the streets. All the staff and facility are "maxed-out". Zaharoff suggested increasing fees for adult programs not the the ones for children. When questioned about fundraisers, Gary Howell responded that he is currently working on two. He stated that he was doing his best to meet the budget but that \$15,000 in rental fees are diverted to Isabel Cook Center and is therefore lost from the recreation program.

Herman Kramer suggested other unexplored avenues of funding such as approaching the Buck Fund, the Department of Education or private grants . Kramer volunteered to sponsor a child in a program who's parent(s) couldn't afford it and hoped that others would follow suit.

BUDGET NO. 482, RECREATION DEPARTMENT

Howell stressed that he needed more help in having a full-time secretary (\$7000 additional per year) in order to staff the office full time, to free him and Chris Sansom in pursuit of more important tasks. Cherilyn Gilboy, Parks and Recreation Commissioner, concurred that full-time help is necessary so that private and state grant money be sought.

BUDGET NO. 481, PARKS

Budget requests were a joint effort by Gary Howell and John Kottage. \$15,000 has been allocated to the Isabel Cook fund, from which janitorial services will be paid. There are now four full-time people assigned to parks with a new foreman. A new sprinkler system is needed (a capital improvement item - \$20,000) but because of budget constraints, the foreman will attempt to upgrade the sprinkler heads instead. Other major items requested but denied are an aerator, a spreader, a truck and a lawn mower. The existing trucks are not in safe condition as compression and steering are gone. An aerator is needed to decompact the soil, as children can get injured on the cement-like surface and water would be absorbed into the ground instead of washing away. Suggestions of renting equipment and buying used equipment were made. Howell responded that used equipment has been purchased in the past but is unadvisable for work trucks .

Howell pointed out the need to repair the rotted walkway in Creek Park which is in danger of collapsing.

BUDGET NO. 485, ISABEL COOK COMPLEX

Compared to last year's budget, this year's has been simplified. Rents are being increased at 4%. The proposed budget is only for utilities and building maintenance. Incoming revenues are \$74,400, with \$13,400 in capital improvements, the majority going to the Peace Center and the remainder will be available for minor improvements. There is \$33,000 in the building renovation fund. Monies for services are taken from tenant's rental fees and revenue for rental spaces.

In all budget categories, Herman Kramer would like to see a breakdown in insurance premiums paid by the Town, especially the Isabel Cook Complex. Dickens agreed to look into it.

Adjournment at 9:45 p.m. to August 16, 1988, 7:00 p.m.

Rose Wager