

TOWN OF SAN ANSELMO
MINUTES OF THE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING OF AUGUST 16, 1989
ON THE PROPOSED 1989-90 BUDGET

Mayor Walsh convened the second session of public hearings on the 89-90 Budget at 7:10 p.m., following a closed session regarding personnel matters beginning at 6:30 p.m., with Councilmembers Chignell, Colteaux, Sharp and Zaharoff present.

Beth Pollard, Interim Town Administrator, opened this hearing by saying that this budget is a status quo budget. All departments are being staffed at the current level of operations, pending the outcome of the "Long-Term Finances Committee" in their deliberations on the Town's finances.

BUDGET NO. 416 LEGAL SERVICES

A request was made for an hourly raise of \$5.00 which would bring the fee to \$105.00 per hour. In last year's budget, the appropriations were over budget by approximately \$30,000 due to unanticipated litigation.

Colteaux requested that the legal services should be presented in more detail in the budget for public information. Too much is spent on legal fees and a 20% reduction is requested.

Town Attorney pointed out that \$40,000 was spent for consultation and the balance for litigation. Part of the fees are due to the work of his legal assistant, who works more hours but at a lesser rate, and he will look at doing more of the work himself to cut down on costs. The bulk of litigation taken place over the last year is abnormal and is not anticipated to continue.

Sharp commented that some of the large legal fees involved planning issues and hopefully with the new Planning Department position, a reduction in attorney will result. A 5% increase in the hourly rate is fine and is far below that which is in the municipal law market.

Chignell said that the legal services provided by the Town Attorney are exemplary and the 5% inflation factor is acceptable. In order to cut on costs, he suggests having the Attorney put on a monthly retainer.

Hadden responded that he has no problem with that but he felt that it is not the best deal for the Town, because if he doesn't use the time, he still gets paid and in the past such an arrangement was determined not to be cost effective.

Zaharoff enthusiastically embraces any kind of cut in the legal budget provided that such a cut could be done reasonably and without compromising the Town's position.

Walsh expressed concern with the amount of litigation this small town is subjecting itself to compared with other towns. The suggestion of having a retainer is welcome as the Town will be given a choice of whether we proceed, back-off or whether outside help should be brought in. Discussion followed on pros and cons of having the Town Attorney on retainer basis.

Herman Kramer, 1 Allemand Place, said the Town Attorney has also collected fees from the Town's insurance authority. He felt that the Town Council is ultimately responsible for legal fees as they have not made enough effort to resolve problems without using legal means.

Vic Canby, 22 Crescent Road, said he spoke on behalf of Sarah Nome and echoed her concerns of the Town's high legal costs.

Cynthia Barrows, 265 Crescent Road, expressed her opinion that it is outrageous for the Town Council to listen to comments of persons bringing lawsuits against the Town and complaining about legal fees.

BUDGET NO. 414 SAN ANSELMO VOLUNTEER EFFORT (S.A.V.E.)

Pollard relayed that the secretarial service fees will now be paid entirely by the Town instead of half the amount, and that services, supplies, and training will be paid entirely by Friends of SAVE.

Helen Cameron, S.A.V.E. boardmember, thanked the Council for their support and summarized their many activities and accomplishments in the past year. Because of S.A.V.E.'s successful endeavors, other towns and cities are now following suit and are using S.A.V.E. as a role model.

Herman Kramer felt that the volunteer program should be run by uncompensated volunteers.

Tina Jeplick, Director of the Volunteer Center of Marin, disagreed with the former comment and explained that the organizations with a paid volunteer coordinator showed a higher degree of success than those with a coordinator who was not paid.

Eliza Wingate, Library Director, expressed her thanks to S.A.V.E. for the 250 volunteer hours donated to the Library last month.

Zaharoff conveyed her thanks to the S.A.V.E. department for being a great resource of creative and talented citizens who are willing to volunteer their time and ideas to make San Anselmo a nice place to live.

Pollard added her appreciation to the S.A.V.E. volunteer effort for all their work in the Administration and Finance Department.

BUDGET NO. 471 LIBRARY

Pollard explained that this budget does not address the future of the library building and services, but is a status quo budget based on the level of operation over the last several years. The only change is the Town's participation in the County circulation system.

Eliza Wingate explained that one of the recommendations of the Library Services Committee was to join the County Circulation System. The Marin Inter-library Network Directors applied for and received a Grant from the Marin Community Foundation whose end product is to produce a book catalogue of all of the public libraries in Marin. The Library was awarded only one year's worth of the Grant in the amount of \$24,000 to pay for hardware, telecommunication lines, maintenance of hardware and staff costs necessary to add our holdings to the city/county library circulation database which already includes the city libraries of Mill Valley and Sausalito. Because this Grant is paying for hardware and staff, it will cost the Town only \$2,500 for six months to join the county circulation system, which will enable the Town to recoup fines (\$5,000) and lost books (\$10,000) easily and to access an additional 830,000 titles.

On Item 23, Building Maintenance, the 89-90 recommended budget will change by about \$3,000 as the Town was able to secure janitorial services at a lower cost.

Cynthia Barrows, member of the Finances Committee, recommended getting comparative figures before the Town gives the County \$3,000 from the book budget (item 31) to bar-code, enter into the County database, cover, and transport to the library.

BUDGET #421 NON-DEPARTMENTAL

Pollard said the budget is same as last year and the main differences are: Object 14, insurance projected costs for next year are down, based on liabilities in the past (claims situation is improving and therefore our payments are being decreased appropriately), and Object 20 - the primary increase is for the cost of animal control services (being looked into by a subcommittee of the City/County Issues Committee of the Marin County Council of Mayors and Councilmembers).

There are several requests for funding from service agencies which the Administrator is unable to recommend due to the number of requests for Town funds on areas that are more clearly th Town's responsibility.

Colteaux asked for the status of the Mayors and Councilmembers study on City-County funding relationships. Pollard has a preliminary draft copy of that study and it is being looked at by city managers and is not yet ready to go before mayors and councilmembers.

Chignell asked about the request to the homeless fund from Supervisor Stockwell to which many of the cities are contributing. Walsh responded that a study is currently underway under the auspices of the Marin County Council of Mayors and Councilmembers and the Town is expecting a comprehensive approach to result from this study.

Jodi Becker, Program Coordinator of the Marin County Mediation Services, requested \$2,500 from the Town's budget. She said they had 255 requests for service in 1988 from San Anselmo residents and have had an 88% success rate. When asked by Chignell why Mediation Services was not funded by the County, she replied that this is not a mandated county service. She feels that their services have saved the Town anywhere from \$20,000 to \$30,000 for legal fees.

Derick Cunningham, from the Marin Housing Authority, voiced his support for Mediation Services.

Dave Griffis, spoke in support of the Marin Abused Womens Services (MAWS), requests any financial support the Town can provide. MAWS provides a 24-hour crisis line for both the victim and the batterer, offers long-term counselling, and provides shelter.

Jennifer Lenway, Executive Director of the Marin Community Health Center, requested \$2,000 from the Town's budget, to go directly to patient's services. 240 San Anselmo residents have used their public health service.

Herman Kramer, 1 Allemand Place, voiced his objection on the funding structure for health insurance for Town's retirees. He suggested a retirement fund be set up for employees for future years.

Zaharoff asked whether the Town has any options for contracting for animal services. Pollard replied that it is legally possible for the Town to provide the services that the Humane Society now provides.

Colteaux felt that the Marin County Supervisors should provide a rational funding base for the worthy organizations that yearly request financial support.

Chignell felt that a rational basis for allocating money for social services will never happen. He felt that the requests are very small and the Town had an obligation to help services who help our community.

BUDGET NO. 412 ADMINISTRATION & FINANCE

The primary difference in this year's budget is accounting services. Due to a change in the payroll/business license clerk position, the responsibility for payroll were shifted to the account clerk's. This proved unsuccessful, therefore Administration needs to either augment the hours of the account clerk or hire a part-time person for the payroll function. Also due to the account clerk's extended sick leave, there is an increase in the amount requested in item 20.

Colteaux inquired whether Administration could perform all the payroll functions in-house. Pollard agreed and highly recommend a computer program be purchased.

When Colteaux asked about the increases in line item 20, Outside Services, Pollard relayed that the use of outside financial experts other than the Town's auditors was recommended. Colteaux asked to see detailed figures for this large increase. He also requested a breakdown of figures for line item 15, equipment maintenance for computer hardware and software. Line item 23, building maintenance will be lowered as a new contract for janitorial services is less than was anticipated.

Kramer felt that the Town Council has not been hiring the right people as the Town must subcontract outside for services such as the state's mandate reimbursement consultant.

Colteaux asked where in the budget the income received from any such reimbursement would show. Pollard said she would look into it.

BUDGET NO. 492 RESERVE FOR CONTINGENCIES

Pollard felt that there should be more money in reserves for any unforeseen circumstances.

Chignell asked whether the total figures for Sales Taxes were included yet in the budget. Pollard responded that she did not know but would find out.

Sharp commented that he was gratified to see that the Long-term Finances Committee was present at this meeting.

Colteaux asked whether Pollard worked with Ernie Dickens on the budget as he was impressed with the amount of detail she knew. She responded that she worked with him on the administration and on the non-departmental budgets, and went over some of the highlights of the changes in the other departments.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:45 p.m. The next budget hearing will be on August 23rd, 1989 at 7:00 p.m.

Rose Wager