

Town of San Anselmo
Minutes of the Town Council Special Meeting of August 30, 1994
Budget Hearings

Present: Breen, Chignell, Kroot, Yarish
Absent: Zaharoff

Chignell opened the meeting by announcing that no decisions were made during closed session, attended by Breen, Kroot, and Yarish.

Lydia Grzac asked the Council to consider the Festival of Student Art's request for \$2700, the same amount as was given last year. The Festival includes all schools, private and public in the Ross Valley area and any child who lives or goes to school in this area is eligible. The entire budget for next year is about \$10,000, up \$3,000 from the previous year. Much of this money goes for prizes, and donations are also received from merchants and other donors.

Yarish asked about the pending issue of the Art Commission. At present they are waiting for more applications, and this item will be on a future agenda.

Conclusion of public hearings on the 1994-95 budget:

(a) Police Department

Town Administrator Pollard said the Police Departments accomplishments for last year include working with the schools to increase communication with children of all ages and coordinating dispatch services with Ross and the College of Marin, which generated new revenue and fostered more cooperative efforts in law enforcement. Priorities for this year include expanding press relations and launching a Community Services division to work with business and residential communities to curtail graffiti and other crimes.

The Police budget has no changes proposed in the labor cost area. Object 20, Services and Supplies, reflects the additional cost of the hepatitis vaccine, which we are required to provide to employees. Under Equipment, one patrol vehicle is scheduled to be replaced this year (two scheduled for next year), computer equipment to replace personal property of officers used for police business, and a fax machine to reduce court runs. Under Revenues, parking permits for downtown are separated, thus a projected drop in revenue.

Police Chief Del Santo has several ideas regarding generating additional revenue. The department could handle residential and commercial alarms through their office, as opposed to going through alarm companies. This would not only generate revenue, but also provide faster response to the alarms. Town Administrator Pollard said they will look into the idea, pursue any legal issues and bring back to Council for a further look.

Police Chief Del Santo said they feel they can improve upon the service provided by the Marin Parking Authority, but it may be difficult to pull out. Town Administrator Pollard said they would explore the issue, but feels it would be difficult to strike out alone without bringing others from the Joint Powers Authority.

Yarish asked about the Building Maintenance money, whether money could be shifted to provide more for maintenance. Del Santo replied that there is really no place to shift.

Chignell asked about the DARE Program. Del Santo said the money for this comes from contributions, like from the County of Marin, but there is also budget money allocated under Object 21.

Breen asked if the air conditioner will make it through the year. Town Administrator Pollard replied that the air conditioner serves the whole Town Hall complex and they've been told that it could go out at any time.

Kroot asked why there was a significant decrease in parking fines. Del Santo explained that while waiting for promised hand-held computers to arrive, they ran out of citations,

and had to wait for their arrival. This happened twice and caused a significant decrease in revenue.

Sarah Nome, 77 Alder, said she feels it is too much to replace cars every year in such a small town. She thinks the police patrol too much and put too many miles on the cars. She asked why the Major Crimes Task Force can't contribute money to drug education.

Police Chief Del Santo said the cars patrol because it keeps crime down.

(b) Appropriations Limit

Town Administrator Pollard that the appropriations limit is a provision of Proposition 4, the Gann limit. You begin with the prior year's limit, and, using the Consumer Price Index and the population change of San Anselmo or Marin County, whichever is greater, and calculate the change factor. Our limit for fiscal year 1994-95 is \$3,838,742. Proceeds from taxes covered by the limit for 1994-95 are estimated to be \$3,849,658. Some proceeds are exempt from the limit, amounting to at least \$363,272 for San Anselmo. Our estimated leeway for 1994-95 is \$352,356.

Kroot asked where the Consumer Price Index number comes from. Pollard replied that it comes from the State of California.

Yarish asked how the upcoming bond issue will affect the appropriation limit. Pollard replied that it will not affect it as it is a voter approved debt.

(c) Concluding comments and revisions for all departments and funds.

Town Council, Budget No. 411 - Town Administrator Pollard said under "Accomplishments" Oak Avenue and the garbage franchise transfer would be added. Under "Priorities" will be added the garbage transfer and improving solid waste and recycling in the Town.

Administration/Finance, Budget No. 412 - Pollard noted a correction in Object 20 - Outside Services, where an expenditure that should have been posted to Legal was posted to Administration in error. This will be corrected in the final budget.

Pollard said staff is pursuing arrangements with the County for personnel recruitment services. They will be preparing a proposal, but the services may not be free this time. Breen will discuss this with Supervisor Brown to see if the fee can be waived or negotiated.

San Anselmo Volunteer Effort, Budget No. 414 - No changes were noted.

Legal Services, Budget No. 416 - Pollard noted a wording change under "Services and Supplies"; Legal Counsel and Paralegal should read "Legal Counsel and Legal Assistant", with the actual 93-94 figure at \$86,901.

Pollard said there was a suggestion from Council the "Litigation Expense" category be reduced from \$40,000 to \$15-20,000.

Sarah Nome, 77 Alder, said you are purchasing legal opinions and paying an extraordinary amount of money. She feels there is no need to have the Town Attorney sit at every Council meeting. A wage cap and job description are needed. Legal matters should be on the agenda early so the Town Attorney can leave when the discussion is finished. She said the legal budget should be cut by 25%, perhaps 50%.

Town Attorney Roth said that if people see that the Town has no budget for litigation expense, they will feel there is no will to fight a suit. The Town may therefore see more suits. The litigation budget shows the public that the Town has money to fight a suit. The money will not be spent unless it is necessary, but it's there if we need it.

Breen said this is a philosophy question. He feels that if the Town gets into litigation, they will see it through. In the Oak Avenue matter we went way over budget because we believed it was the right thing to do. Council is not limited by this budget. Cutting it in half gives people the idea that we are attempting to be reasonable. It is a self-imposed control on Council, indicating that they'll look at issues as they come up. He said reducing the figure to \$25,000 would be OK with him.

Town Attorney Roth said the Gill matter is a good example. Mr. Gill thought the Town wouldn't pursue the litigation, probably because of the Town's actions in the Helfrich matter. He noted that it is conceivable that there would not be other reserves when we need them. A budget should be based on needs and not a philosophical theory.

Yarish said that with Helfrich the problem was not a lack of will but a lack of planning, done against legal advice. When litigation comes up you can go ahead and appropriate the money. But now, with no spare money in the budget and a bond measure coming, it seems right to cut back on this money.

Town Attorney Roth asked how much would you appropriate? It would take a lot to get the message across. If you don't set it aside now you might not have it later.

Kroot said he hopes we don't spend any of the money. He is worried about appearing weak if there is no money in litigation expense. He'd like to leave it as it is.

Chignell agreed with Kroot. He said the Council thinks carefully when faced with litigation matters. To put the money in as litigation happens defeats our position. The demands on the Contingency Fund are frequent, and it is conceivable that the money might not be available. If it is not used, it would be available for carryover.

Merle Sheldon, Town Treasurer, said Town Attorney Roth used to spend only 37 hours a year for meetings.

Town Attorney Roth said he has always spent about 30 hours a month in general legal services. This hasn't varied over the years. He doesn't come to meetings if it isn't necessary. He leaves when his item is disposed of.

Town Administrator Pollard said she is concerned that if we don't have it set aside somewhere, it may not be available when needed.

Sarah Nome, 77 Alder, said that last year the Legal budget was \$60,000. She feels that it ought to be made public when the legal budget has gone over. She said that Roth also represents Ross, the Buck Center, and has his own law practice. Now the Council is asking for a big bond measure when it doesn't cut back when it could.

Chignell cautioned that cutting this item may hurt the Town's position with respect to litigation.

Town Attorney Roth said that this is basically a contingency fund for litigation expenses. Perhaps it should be called that.

It was the consensus of Council to keep the amount at \$40,000, and call it Legal Contingency.

Planning Services, Budget No. 418 - It has been decided to delete the part-time Code Compliance Officer from the proposed budget, and to convert the contract position to an employee planner position full-time, with planning duties and code education and compliance duties. This position would be at an Assistant Planner salary level. The amended department labor costs are \$172,087. In the Priorities section, "enhance service and responsiveness to the public" has been added. The total budget figure is \$206,737.

Kroot said perhaps the Council should get the subcommittee together again to look at ordinances and the review permit process.

Planning Director Chaney pointed out the Planning Commission has made a commitment to let the public fully express itself on matters before the Commission. This can sometimes be a lengthy process, but she feels it has eliminated some appeals as everyone feels they've been heard.

Non-Departmental, Budget No. 421 - The \$12,000 contribution to the Campaign for a Healthier Community for Children has been moved to Recreation.

Breen said he is concerned with the amount of money budgeted for the contractual animal control services from the Marin Humane Society (Object 21). He asked the Town Administrator to take these concerns to the JPA.

Town Administrator Pollard said that several community service donations were requested but not budgeted, including the Drake Teen Center (\$2,000 requested), Festival of Student Art (\$2,700+ requested), and the Marin Concerned Citizens (\$2,500 requested). The Rape Crisis Center requested \$2,000, but only \$1,500 was budgeted.

Yarish said he feels strongly that the Festival of Student Art and the Drake Teen Center should be funded. All three of his colleagues present agreed.

Sarah Nome, 77 Alder, said that the appropriation for Open Space has gone very high and she doesn't know why we need this. She would like to see Open Space taken out. We already have plenty of open space and we can't afford this.

Kroot said he would like to give the Rape Crisis Center the additional \$500 requested, and Yarish and Chignell agreed.

Police, Budget No. 430 - No changes were made to this budget.

Fire Services, Budget No. 432 - No changes were made to this budget.

Engineering & Inspection, Budget No. 441 - To the "Priorities" section will be added "Find ways to streamline production of permit processing".

Street Maintenance, Budget No. 442 - Accomplishments to add include "Enhanced response to requests for service, extended life and usefulness of streets and storm drains where viable with patching and other repairs."

Library Services, Budget No. 471 - The Library Service Statistics Reports will be incorporated into "Accomplishments."

Parks, Budget No. 481 - No changes were made to this budget.

Recreation Transfer, Budget No. 482 - This budget was increased to reflect the inclusion of the Campaign for a Healthier Community for Children funds.

Recreation, Budget No. 483 - The budget is adjusted to reflect the purchase of accounting services (Object 20), and the \$12,000 Campaign donation (Object 25).

Merle Sheldon, Town Treasurer, asked if Recreation donations are a liability. Town Administrator Pollard will check.

Isabel Cook Community Center, Budget No. 485 - This budget has been amended to reflect the deletion of \$7,500 for repairs to the 1024 Sir Francis Drake house pending Council action.

Contingency, Budget No. 492 - No changes were made to this budget.

Equipment Transfer and Fund - Changes here show up in the individual department budgets.

Chignell asked if revenues from property taxes were estimated conservatively. Town Administrator Pollard said the lower estimate is due to the teeter funds, and next year's estimate is based on a 5.6% property value increase.

Sarah Nome, 77 Alder, said that in 1954 the citizens voted on a pension override tax for volunteer firemen who had no insurance. She said we still have this, plus the regular pension for employees. San Anselmo is the only town with two pensions for employees. She asked if the Town wouldn't retire the \$20 pension override.

Capital Projects - No changes were made to this budget.

Town Administrator Pollard said that the complete budget will be presented for adoption at the next regular Council meeting on September 13, 1994.

(d) Appropriation of \$20,000 from Equipment Fund for acquisition of MarinNet Online Catalog for the Library. (Request action prior to adoption of full budget scheduled for September 13, 1994.)

Town Librarian Heather Lamb said the acquisition of MarinNet Online Catalog for the Library will allow them to access information from other Libraries across Marin.

M/s, Breen/Yarish, to appropriate \$20,000 from the Equipment Fund for acquisition of MarinNet Online Catalog. Ayes: All. Absent: Zaharoff.

(e) Adjourn.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:15 p.m.

Debbie Stutsman