

A special meeting of the Town Council held for the Town of Scituate on Saturday, March 29, 2008 in the Hope School, 391 Hope Road, Hope was called to order at 9:27 AM. Council Vice-President Farrar presiding.

After pledging allegiance to the flag of our country, Town Clerk Long called the roll. Roll call vote as follows:

Councilman Salisbury --present	Councilman D'Agostino -- present
Councilwoman Knowlton-absent	Councilman Winfield--present
Councilman Collins-present	Council Vice-President Farrar --present
Council President Budway absent	

Motion made Councilman D'Agostino, seconded by Councilman Collins and voted by roll call to adjourn to closed session pursuant to R.I.G.L 42-46-5 (A)2 Litigation-Update on Providence Water Supply Board and to allow Solicitor D'Agostino, Ted Richard, Town Treasurer Przybyla, Town Clerk Long, Representative Carol Mumford and Attorney Ken Borden to attend.

Councilman Salisbury-aye	Councilman Collins-aye
Councilman Winfield-aye	Councilman D'Agostino-aye
Council Vice-President Farrar-aye	

Motion passes adjourned to closed session at 9:30AM.

Reconvened to open session at 10 AM.

Council Vice-President Farrar explained the reason for this morning's meeting is to give the public a chance to ask questions and make comments on the 2008-2009 proposed budget. He said that Council President Budway is unable to make the meeting because he is currently in the hospital. He said that he spoke with him this morning and everything seems to be fine. He also wanted to say that the Council and the Town are very lucky to have such a dedicated and capable person as the Town Council President.

At this time, Council Vice-President Farrar asked Town Clerk Long to read the message that Council President Budway wrote to the residents of the Town, which is included in the financial town budget brochure. (copy herewithin)

Council Vice-President Farrar said after the reading, any Council member may make a comment, and then he will open it up to the audience.

Councilman D'Agostino stated that the Town Council and the School Committee worked very hard to finalize this budget. He said that it was not easy with the constraints that the State is putting on the Town. He said that difficult cuts had to be made, and that he feels that this is an equitable budget. He understands that whenever cuts have to be made it is not easy, and that people will be upset.

Councilman Salisbury stated that if the State hadn't gotten itself into such a deficit, this would not be happening. He said that he feels that the tax cap is a positive idea, but there are also many down sides to it. He also said that with the decreasing tax cap every year, things are only going to worse. He said that the cap does limit what the Town can and is willing to do.

Town Treasurer Przybyla said that he has received emails stating that the budget has been changed since it was ratified by the Town Council a couple of weeks ago. He said that this is false; nothing has been or legally could be changed at this time unless the Town Council votes on it at an open meeting.

Council Vice-President Farrar stated that this is not the end of the process; he said that the Council and School Committee will work very hard this year to review all Town services and see where we can save money and streamline services. He stated that this is an ongoing process.

Bill Mack, Betty Pond Road asked the Council to explain the position of EMA/EMS Director and to verify why the job changed a few years ago. He said that he has heard the rumor that this was done to create a job and wasn't needed. He said that he knows this is not true.

Councilman Salisbury stated that after 9-11 there were many mandates from the Federal Government requiring a strong EMA department. At that time it was part of the Public Works Director's job. With all of the mandates from the Federal Government, it was impossible for one person to do it along with his other duties. Therefore, the Council did create a new position. Another reason is because the Town starting have a paid rescue service during the day, and someone had to be responsible for overseeing and scheduling.

Council Vice-President Farrar said that at this time the Council is in the middle of hiring a new Public Works Director and the EMA duties will be put back into that department. He said that we will have to hire a new part-time Recreation Director because that aspect of the job will be deleted.

Kurt Reric, Main Street, Hope, asked about the negotiations with the PWSB. He said that this is a very important aspect to the entire Town.

Council Vice-President Farrar said that the Council just had a closed session to discuss the negotiations, and even though he can't tell the audience the particulars, he said that that they are moving along. He said the Council is working very hard to bring this to a conclusion.

Councilman Salisbury said that he is "cautiously optimistic."

Rudy Bettez, Hope Furnace Road, Hope, asked the Council what their opinion is about Representative Gorham's idea to merge five surrounding Towns into one large Town.

Councilman Salisbury said that this has been mentioned before, and that he is not in favor of it. He said that we can explore ways to pool resources among the Towns, but not to merge. Especially among the five towns that he suggested we merge with, we are probably the only one that is financially secure.

Council Vice-President Farrar said that he agrees with that statement, but is not opposed to investigating other ways the Towns can save money by combining services and purchases.

Liz McCaughey, Mosquansicut Lake Drive asked about the sale of the reservoir and said that she was under the impression that the City of Providence could not make any money on the sale.

Representative Mumford said that the City cannot make any money on the sale of the water, but if they sold the watershed, they could make a profit. She said that there have been numerous bills in the General Assembly to allow the City to make money on the water but they always are voted down.

Council Vice-President Farrar said that since there are no more questions, he wanted to thank the audience for coming.

Motion made by Councilman D'Agostino, seconded by Councilman Winfield and voted by consent agreement to adjourn at 10:30 AM and to keep the minutes of the meeting previously closed to the public; closed pursuant to RIGL 42-46-4 and 42-46-5 and allow the Town Clerk 14 days to prepare the minutes of the meeting.

Attest:

Margaret M. Long, Town Clerk