

TOWN COUNCIL
Town of Trumbull
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TOWN HALL
Trumbull

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LEGISLATION & ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE
MINUTES
MARCH 3, 2016

The Chair called the Legislation & Administration Committee to order at 7:06 p.m. All present joined in a moment of silence and the Pledge of Allegiance. The Chair acknowledged to Mr. Pifko and Mr. Marconi's birthday and extended his best wishes to them.

The clerk called the roll and recorded it as follows:

PRESENT: Enrico Costantini, Chairman, Jack Testani, Vice Chairman, Joseph Pifko, Edna Colucci, Thomas Whitmoyer, Mark Block, Alternate and William Mecca, Alternate

ABSENT: Jason Marsh

ALSO

PRESENT: First Selectman Timothy Herbst, Town Council Chairman Carl A. Massaro, Jr., Chief of Staff Lynn Arnow, Director of Finance Maria Pires, Town Attorney Dennis Kokenos, Co-Chairman of the Senior/Community Center & Library Study and Building Committee Daniel Marconi, Town Council Members Matthew Caron, Dawn Cantafio, Ann Marie Evangelista, and Mary Beth Thornton.

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1. RESOLUTION TC26-37: Moved by Pifko, seconded by Testani
BE IT RESOLVED, That the First Selectman is hereby authorized to execute an application along with all necessary Agreements/Contractual documents to the State Department of Transportation on behalf of the Town of Trumbull for a grant toward the purchase of a Motor Vehicle for Elderly and/or Disabled Persons as part of the Town's Transportation Program.

Ms. Arnow explained this resolution would allow the Town to apply for the fiscal year 2017-2018 bus. The Town was awarded a bus in 2015 a bus which falls under the 2017-2017 fiscal year. Currently there are three busses on lease, the 2015, 2013 and the 2012. The 2011 falls off the lease this year and will become the property of the Town on July 1st of this year. The 2009 bus has 52,000 miles, the 2011 has 28,000 miles, the 2012 has 27,500 miles, the 2013 has 16,500 miles and the 2015 is currently in the procurement process. It is not guaranteed the Town will qualify for the bus since it

is based on need and the mileage on the busses in our inventory is considerably lower than other towns'. The Town did not apply for the bus in 2014. The Town could skip applying this year and reapply next year when there is a greater need. The bus falls off the lease after 4 years. The Town covers 20% of the cost of the vehicle; this does not include the fuel, staff, maintenance or the insurance for the vehicle.

VOTE: Motion CARRIED unanimously.

2. RESOLUTION TC25-34: Moved by Whitmoyer, seconded by Testani.
BE IT RESOLVED AND ORDAINED, That Article III, Boards, Commissions, Committees, and Agencies Division 6, Board of Finance of the Trumbull Municipal Code is hereby amended to include Section 2-183, Annual Required Contribution (ARC) For the Town's Retirement Plans and the Police Retirement Income Plan. (Full Resolution Attached)

The Chair opened the Public Hearing at 7:16 p.m.

There were three (3) people present to speak to the resolution. (Public Comment Attached)

The Chair closed the Public Hearing at 7:22 p.m.

First Selectman Herbst stated the internal policy of funding to the ARC has been in place since he has been first selectman, six plus years. In the 8 years prior to his administration Trumbull had seen a 54% increase in taxes and borrowing had more than doubled with the pension fund only funded at 27%. In his first two weeks of office the financial rating agencies had made it clear that if the Town did not deal with this problem the Town's credit rating would be downgraded. This is significant and important because if the credit rating is downgraded the Town will pay more on money borrowed to invest in meaningful capital projects. The Town has 5 of 6 elementary schools older than THS and has boilers with an average age of 55 years old. The Town will need to invest in the schools over the next decade to get them up to par. The credit rating needs to be maintained at a strong level. The taxpayers will realize millions in savings with a strong credit rating. The Town was upgraded to AA+ rating by funding to the ARC. This is one step away from the AAA credit rating. With hard work they were able to fully fund the ARC for both the Town and Police pensions and were able to do so without pension obligation bonds. The financial rating agencies collectively agree and this has been documented, if this ordinance is adopted it would further improve the Town's credit worthiness toward attaining the AAA credit rating. The Town is one of the most financially secure towns in the State of CT. The tax rate has been stable and that is one of the reasons why we have been able to grow the Grand List in the past six years. The voters did not have these facts when voting on this provision of the last Charter Revision. There will come a time when somebody else will be in the first selectman's office, and will want to lower taxes and give more money to the schools. There are certain things that can't be cut based on the fact they are fixed cost. The Town is at a ten-year low when it comes to employee headcount there and can not be reduced any further. The new administration will then look to reduce what they can, such as the ARC funding. If this is done the town could end up back to where it started, not fully funding the pensions and the Town's credit rating can be downgraded as a result. This is happening in Hartford now. The Town has negotiated for all new hires to participate in the Defined Contribution Plan. While the number of employees in Town have been reduced, there still has been hire of additional police officers to the department.

First Selectman Herbst explained for Mr. Mecca that many of the residents he spoke to after the last Charter Revision expressed to him the language on the ballot referring to “a fully funded pension” was perceived as the government was providing a rich benefit on the expense of the taxpayers. First Selectman Herbst noted he regretted not better explaining this to the taxpayers, the message was not clear. This ordinance is especially important for those who are concerned with the condition of our schools. The Town will need to invest money into the schools in the next ten years and will need to borrow the funds to do so. This ordinance will allow to the Town to attain a better credit rating which will allow the Town to borrow those funds at a better interest rate. Because this is an ordinance, the council has the ability to repeal and/or amend the ordinance in the future. The council can revisit this any time they wish to. This will allow us to see our unfunded liabilities as hard debt not as soft debt and not kick the can down the road.

Mr. Whitmoyer stated this resolution takes away the ability to decide and puts a strain on the Town to fund this. Mr. Whitmoyer noted that Mr. Marsh was not present at this meeting and had requested his comments be read at this meeting, (See Attached)

The Chair noted for the record and corrected Mr. Whitmoyer this resolution did have a public hearing and added that there is public comment at the full Town Council meetings as well. This is not the same provision put forth in the previous Charter Revision. Many people at that time had advocated this should be an ordinance in order to allow for a quicker turn around for a change if it did become something that we did not want to do. Section 4 discusses the 5-year provision. This does not prevent the council from revisiting this prior to the 5 years it only requires that it shall be reviewed every 5 years.

First Selectman Herbst referred to the actuarial analysis and the fact the Town’s new hires all go into the Defined Contribution Plan. There is significant retirement turnover this year as well as the projected turnover in the next five years. All of those replacements will go into the Defined Contribution Plan. As time goes on with the ARC being fully funded and as less employees are going into the pension plan. The hard part has already been done and was getting to this point over the past six years. Many people felt the referendum with regard to capital projects over \$15 million may have had catastrophic effects, but what has happened instead is that it has led to better budgets delivered where the Town has consistently invested in its roads, facilities and has not kicked the can down the road.

Mr. Massaro further clarified the language of Section 3(b) of the ordinance is an average of the prior three (3) fiscal year contributions, not percentages. There can be a significant lesser amount in terms of the contribution in the three averaging requirement. The actuaries’ recommended number is the 100% funding requirement. The BOF and the Council can consider an average of the three prior years’ contributions. So even if you have three fiscal years in a row where you fund the pension to 100% of the ARC, the numbers are different for each of those years, so the average is by those contributions not percentage. The idea is to maintain the integrity of the ordinance which is to fund to or close to the actuarial recommended contribution.

VOTE: Motion CARRIED 4-1-1 (AGAINST: Whitmoyer) (ABSTENTION: Mecca)

3. RESOLUTION TC25-35: Moved by Colucci, seconded by Testani.
BE IT RESOLVED AND ORDAINED, That Article III, Boards, Commissions, Committees, and Agencies Division 6, Board of Finance of the Trumbull Municipal Code is hereby amended to include Section 2-184, Minimum Funding of the Town's General Fund Balance. (Full Resolution Attached)

The Chair opened the Public Hearing at 8:51 p.m.
There was one (1) person present to speak.
The Chair closed the Public Hearing at 8:53 p.m.

First Selectman Herbst explained for Mr. Pifko the general rule of the financial rating agencies is for a municipality to maintain its general fund balance at 10-12% of the overall operating budget for a favorable rating. The Town is currently at 10.5%. His predecessor did a good job at growing the Fund Balance; it had started with First Selectman Halaby and continued with former First Selectman Baldwin. He had grown it to just shy of 10%.

VOTE: Motion CARRIED 4-1-1 (AGAINST: Mecca) (ABSTENTION: Whitmoyer)

4. RESOLUTION TC26-36: Moved by Mecca, seconded by Pifko.
BE IT RESOLVED AND ORDAINED, That Chapter 2, Article II, Officers and Employees of the Trumbull Municipal Code is hereby amended to include Section 2-56, Pension Recipients, Employees and Family members Prohibited From Serving On The Town Pension Board and Trumbull Police Commission. (Full Resolution Attached) (Public Hearing)

Moved by Testani, seconded by Whitmoyer to amend the resolution by striking "employees of the Town" from the full resolution.

VOTE: Motion CARRIED unanimously.

The Chair opened the Public Hearing at 7:56 p.m.
There was no one present to speak.
The Chair Closed the Public Hearing at 7:57 p.m.

VOTE: As amended CARRIED unanimously.

5. RESOLUTION TC26-40: Moved by Testani, seconded by Whitmoyer.
BE IT RESOLVED, That the Town Attorney and Tax Collector are hereby authorized to foreclose real property tax liens on 408 Shelton Road.

Attorney Kokenos suggested entering into Executive Session in order to discuss this issue and its pending litigation.

Moved by Colucci, seconded by Pifko to enter into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing pending litigation.

VOTE: Motion CARRIED unanimously.

The L&A Committee entered into Executive Session at 7:58 p.m. with the following people present: L&A Committee members Enrico Costantini, Chairman, Jack Testani, Vice Chairman, Joseph Pifko,

Edna Colucci, Thomas Whitmoyer, Mark Block, Alternate and William Mecca, Alternate, Town Council Chairman Carl Massaro, Town Attorney Kokenos, Town Council members, Ann Marie Evangelista, Dawn Cantafio, Mary Beth Thornton.

Moved by Testani, seconded by Whitmoyer to end Executive Session.

VOTE: Motion CARRIED unanimously.

The L&A Committee ended Executive Session at 8:35 p.m.

VOTE: Motion CARRIED unanimously.

Moved by Colucci, seconded by Testani to call a recess.

VOTE: Motion CARRIED unanimously.

The L&A Committee recessed at 8:36 p.m.

The L&A Committee was called back to order at 8:43 p.m.

6. RESOLUTION TC26-44: Moved by Testani, seconded Colucci.

BE IT RESOLVED, That the Senior/Community Center & Library Study and Building Committee is authorized to design and construct a new Senior /Community Building in the Town of Trumbull.

Moved by Colucci, seconded by Pifko to amend by striking the phrase “and construct”.

Ms. Colucci stated the committee is not at the process of constructing a building and the suggested location is only one idea and is still something the committee is looking into and has not been decided on. There is much more of this plan that has to still be evaluated. Mr. Pifko agreed. Ms. Colucci stated this amendment will remove confusion and anxiety and confirm the committee is at the beginning stages of the process and there should not be the worry of where this will be placed yet. Mr. Pifko and Mr. Marconi, Co-Chairmen of the Building Committee agreed.

VOTE: Motion CARRIED unanimously.

Mr. Marconi Co-Chairman of the committee stated the purpose of the committee is as follows:

- To assess the needs and improve the Senior Center.
- Research the possibility of a Community Center or a combined Center
- At that time of their formation to look at a complex that could possibly combine a Senior/Community Center and the library.

Mr. Marconi explained since then the library has conducted its own research and it has been made clear that most people in Town are happy where the library is. With that in mind the committee took the library out of their plan and focused on the feasibility of upgrading the Senior Center and a multi-use building as a Senior/Community Center.

The committee to date has:

- Visited 11-12 other centers.
- Spoke to people at those on what the pros and cons were, what they liked about the building and what they did not.
- Looked at private land and the possibility of using the old Long Hill School. 6-8 site options. Some had terrible topography.
- Long Hill School was considered but the logistics of what to do with the BOE and the BOE Facilities Department and the current Senior Center in the interim proved to be problematic.

The committee is suggesting taking steps to look at Island Brook Park. The park has 43 acres. An estimate of the building and the parking associated with it would suggest they will need a 2 acre lot. They are hopeful that after suggesting this to the Town that they could formally create a building committee. The Co-Chairmen and the committee will present at the Town Council March, 2016 meeting their results.

Mr. Pifko, Co-Chairman of the committee stated he is very proud of the committee. They have worked hard and have done so in a bi-partisan manner. Government works slowly and that is good because that allows for more public input and they are looking for a lot of public input. They are asking for permission to take the information they have, get an architect involved to start designing the building. They estimate it will be an approximately 20,000 sf. Community Center with senior access. Senior activities tend to be in the morning between 8:00 a.m. to 1:00 or 2:00 p.m. It would be a multi-use building. Island Brook Park is in the center of the Town and would use 1-2 acres out of the 43. If the people of the Town don't want it there, it can be placed elsewhere. The question would then be if not there, where shall it be? They are asking for the authority to start designing the building. One of the problems for different groups in Town is getting a room for a meeting of this size. This new building could have two rooms this size for meetings. They envision it to be a Community Building where the kids can play softball on a Saturday morning and the moms can take a Pilates class and then meet afterwards for coffee. It would be a true Community Center.

Mr. Pifko explained for Mr. Block the committee is of the mind you have to work with the design of the building and the location at the same time, not choosing one or the other first. The current Senior Center building after viewing the other buildings did not compare at all and would need more than a renovation. After the committee's research and having worked with the new committee member, an architect, a preliminary idea for the building would be one floor with a large meeting room in the middle and other activity rooms around the perimeter. If you wanted to have a large dinner of 200 people and/or 200 people with an auditorium and stage you would have it, there would be other multi-purpose rooms possibly for exercise. The Town could put in a second floor for offices if they wanted to but would depend on the site.

Mr. Pifko indicated for Mr. Mecca that they would always want a greater number of people to participate in a survey and wished they had 37,000 responses. The surveys sent to the seniors who actively go to the centers elicited approximately 100 responses. The other survey was a town-wide and received 700 responses. Mr. Mecca cautioned the committee to reevaluate whether there has been enough community participation. Mr. Mecca added they have received a sense from the community that they are upset and have questions. Mr. Pifko stated the committee has solicited and worked towards getting community input; they did two surveys, held three public hearings, sent 2 letters to the editor, placed public notices in the newspaper, and an article was written in the Trumbull Times. They did price a direct mailing; it was \$5,000 per mailing. Their overall budget was \$6,000, so they went the route of public hearings and the other ways listed above. Mr. Pifko also included his email address in the articles so the public could reach him. He welcomes the new public response they are receiving now.

Mr. Marconi added if it is not Island Brook you may have the same argument elsewhere based on the same neighborhood concerns. The Chair stated anywhere in Town it will be in somebody's

backyard. The Chair stated the council has received many emails on this, some of the emails included information that the committee had never discussed, (i.e. removing fields). There is misinformation out there. To the credit of the committee all of their meetings have been noticed and open to the public. They have sent out surveys, and applauded them for trying to get people involved. Nothing definite has been decided to date. This resolution is about getting more information. The design of the building may not fit the suggested location. The committee is in the discovery stage and cautioned everyone there is nothing definitely happening at any location yet.

The Chair confirmed for Ms. Thornton the committee is study committee. Mr. Pifko explained they have looked at different places, the location may change based on design. They have to proceed to the next stage in order to get the information are asking, the exact size, layout etc. After that they could get an estimate. Then the Town and the Town Council could decide if they want to build it. Ms. Thornton stated the public does not understand where we are with the project and it is important that it is made clear to them where we are with this project. This has everyone's attention now and that is great. This is when we can get the pulse of the town of what they want. Mr. Pifko noted his concerned over the information that has been misconstrued and posted on social media and welcomes any questions to come before the committee's meetings. The Chair stated many of the emails received did include misinformation. Tonight's meeting will make clear what part of the process the committee is in, and their recommendation and what this allows the committee to do. Ms. Colucci stated many people have written them with valid concerns, when there is a lot of information going out to the public that is not accurate in its entirety it becomes very concerning for a lot of people who live there and use the park. It is important the correct information gets out to the people. This is in its very preliminary stages. Many of the emails did indicate that they were not opposed to a community center and were simply concerned of the location and that they were told it was the set location. The committee has held numerous public hearings and has done their due diligence but recommended the committee hold even more. Mr. Mecca agreed it is time to reevaluate. Ms. Arnow stated the 2014 Town Plan of Conservation and Development identified a Senior/Community Center as priority #1. Mr. Block would like to keep in perspective what the Town had, what we need and what we can afford as a Town. He wants the process to move forward, a resurvey could be a positive, but it needs to include clear, factual and accurate information and done in a way to encourage people.

Ms. Evangelista asked if the committee had looked at the cost of renovating the current center and noted the Town already has gyms and auditoriums to use. Mr. Marconi stated two of the problems pointed out to them with the current Senior Center is that parking is very difficult and the fact that it is not centrally located. (Mr. Whitmoyer left the meeting at 9:30 p.m.) Ms. Evangelista suggested looking at a Nature/Community Center. As a council person in District 4 she could not support a 20,000 sf building and would take Island Brook off the table.

Mr. Marconi explained they are asking to allow the committee to look at a footprint of a building and consider Island Brook. There are 43 acres there. They would like to look to see where in the park they could put it with the least amount of impact.

The Chair respectfully called the question. The Chair would like to see the committee come back with plans that may enhance the park.

VOTE: As amended 3-1-1 (AGAINST: Mecca) (ABSTENTION: Colucci)

There being no further business to discuss and upon motion made by Colucci, seconded by Pifko the L&A Committee adjourned at 9:34 p.m. by unanimous consent.

Respectfully Submitted,

Margaret D. Mastroni, Town Council Clerk

FULL RESOLUTION TC26-34:

ORDINANCE NO. _____

AN ORDINANCE FOR PERTAINING TO THE ANNUAL REQUIRED CONTRIBUTION (ARC)
FOR THE TOWNS RETIREMENT PLANS AND THE POLICE RETIREMENT INCOME PLAN

WHEREAS, the Town of Trumbull has made great strides to improve its public employee pension fund balances by funding the annual required contributions; and

WHEREAS, effective fiscal year 2015-2016, the Town of Trumbull has fully funded the annual required contribution (ARC) for the Town's retirement plan and the Town's Police retirement plan; and

WHEREAS, the Town of Trumbull desires to achieve a AAA credit rating from the financial rating agencies which have expressed favorable opinions as to the Town of Trumbull's pension funding and which desire to see that funding maintained;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED AND ORDAINED, That Article III, Section 2-183 is enacted as follows:

1. The annual budget adopted for each fiscal year shall, at a minimum fund the actuarial required contributions (ARC) for the Town employee retirement plan and the police retirement plan; and
2. Said amounts for these actuarial required contributions shall be included in the proposed budget submitted by the First Selectman in accordance with Chapter IV, Section I of the Trumbull Town Charter and shall also be included in the budget recommended by the Board of Finance in accordance with Chapter IV, Section 2 of the Town Charter, and the budget adopted by the Trumbull Town Council pursuant to Chapter IV, Section 3 of the Trumbull Town Charter;
3. Notwithstanding the funding requirement adopted above, in any fiscal year in which the Board of Finance determines that economic circumstances so warrant,
 - a) The Board of Finance may recommend, by a vote not less than two thirds (2/3) of its body, that the budget to be adopted for such fiscal year fund a percentage less than (100%) of the ARC for the Town employee retirement plan and police retirement plan.
 - b) If a recommendation to fund the pension plans at a percentage less than (100%) of the actuarial required contribution is made by the Trumbull Board of Finance or if the Board of Finance fails to recommend a budget under Chapter IV of the Trumbull Town Charter, then the Trumbull Town Council may adopt, by a vote of not less than two thirds (2/3) of its entire body, in the budget adopted for such fiscal year, a percentage less than (100%) of the actuarial required contribution for the Town employee retirement plan and the police retirement plans, but in no event less than the average of contributions of the prior three (3) fiscal years.

- c) In the event the Town Council fails to adopt a budget pursuant to Chapter IV of the Town Charter or adopts a budget funding less than 100% of the actuarial required contributions by a vote of less than two thirds (2/3) of its entire body, then the budget so adopted shall be deemed to include 100% of the actuarial required contribution for such fiscal year notwithstanding any other vote to the contrary.
4. The Town of Trumbull shall review this ordinance every five years from the effective adoption date to determine if additional revisions are warranted subject to the present fund ratios of each retirement plan at that time. A vote of two thirds (2/3) of its body shall be required to modify this ordinance.

FULL RESOLUTION TC26-35

ORDINANCE NO. _____
AN ORDINANCE CONCERNING MINIMUM FUNDING OF THE TOWN'S
GENERAL FUND BALANCE

WHEREAS, the financial rating agencies have strongly recommended the Town of Trumbull maintain its general fund balance at not less than 10% of the Town's total operating budget; and

WHEREAS, the Town of Trumbull has made great strides to honor the recommendations of the financial rating agencies in minimally funding our general fund balance at 10% of our total operating budget; and

WHEREAS, the leaders of the Town of Trumbull recognize that for Trumbull to achieve a AAA credit rating which will long term reduce cost to the taxpayers and citizens of the Town of Trumbull; and

WHEREAS, these controls will provide for strict accounting and budgeting and also discourage supplemental appropriations unless absolutely necessary, all in the best financial interest of the Town;

BE IT RESOLVED AND ORDAINED: The Town of Trumbull shall maintain a minimum balance of 10% of its annual operating budget (exclusive of its enterprise funds); provided the First Selectman may make the recommendation in a proposed budget that the minimum fund balance be reduced below 10%, but in no event below 8% of the general fund balance for good cause. Whether recommended by the First Selectman, or not, any proposal to reduce the fund balance below the 10% level shall be subject to approval by a 2/3 affirmative vote of the entire Board of Finance and by a vote of a simple majority of the entire Town Council. Rejection by the Town Council of the recommendation of the Board of Finance to reduce the fund balance below the 10% level shall require a 2/3 vote of the entire membership of the Trumbull Town Council.

FULL RESOLUTION TC26-36

ORDINANCE NO. _____

AN ORDINANCE PROHIBITING PENSION RECIPIENTS FROM SERVING ON THE TOWN PENSION BOARD AND THE TRUMBULL POLICE COMMISSION

WHEREAS, The Town of Trumbull has made great strides to improve its public employee pension funding; and

WHEREAS, The Trumbull Pension Board is responsible for the Town pension fund and the Trumbull Police Pension Board is responsible for the pension fund; and

WHEREAS, All six members of the Police Commission are members of the Police Pension Board; and

WHEREAS, The Town of Trumbull is acutely sensitive to appearance of conflicts of interest;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED AND ORDAINED, all Town of Trumbull Pension Recipients, employees of the Town and their respective family members are prohibited from serving on the Town Pension Board, and;

Trumbull police pension recipients, police officers, employees of the Trumbull Police Department and their family members are prohibited from serving on the Trumbull Police Commission.

No persons may suspend, waive, defer, disclaim or forfeit their pension benefits to serve or permit their family members to serve on the Town Pension Board or the Police Commission.

Public Hearing Comment

Resolution TC26-34

Ms. Lanie McHugh of 132 Fresh Meadow Drive was present. This item was put through the last Charter Revision and was voted down by a large margin and believes it should not come through as an ordinance. The way the ordinance is worded is not great and may cause problems with mandatory funding and that should be looked at closely.

Marshal Marcus of 91 Stonehouse Road was present and spoke to a housekeeping issue. The agenda lists this resolution as both TC25-34 and TC26-34 and believes it should be brought back next month. Town Council Chairman stated the public has had the resolution. The committee may proceed.

Cindy Katske of 129 Meadow View Drive spoke against the resolution. Voters rejected a substantially similar provision in the 2014 Charter Revision and questioned if anyone has consulted with actuaries on this ordinance. Eight other towns were researched by the 2014 Charter Revision Commission only one other town has this provision, (Greenwich). An internal policy has been adopted and questioned why that needs to be changed. If we want an ordinance we need to research more than 8 towns. In 2014 she disagreed with this provision but if this is to be, it needs to be in the Charter and approved by the voters. She has issues with the opt-out provision as drafted. This ordinance upsets the sense of balance, (First Selectman's rule of recommending the level of pension funding and not providing for voting requirements). Section 3a allows for funding at less than 100%, there is a limitation on the Town Council but not that of the BOF, this does not make sense. Section 3-b does not make sense as written.

End Public Hearing Comments

Resolution TC 26-34

Town Council Member Jason March's Comment as read into the record:

That aside, I have concerns that this ordinance, however well intended, may inadvertently and unnecessarily constrain the Town's ability to deal with unexpected economic downturns. I refer specifically to the provision in the ordinance that limits the Council from setting the funding percentage below the average of the previous three years. In the most extreme example, if the Town funds at 100% for the during that period, the Council is effectively prevented from reducing the funding percentage. Even if we don't fund at 100%, absent wild fluctuations from year to year, the Council will be left with very little flexibility. If the economy takes a sudden turn or the worse, we could very well find ourselves forced to fund at or near 100%, which in all likelihood will necessitate a tax increase at a time when it can be least afforded.

On the whole, I think this ordinance has the potential to create more harm than good. We all agree that we should fund to the ARC whenever possible, but we should not take away the ability to employ reasoned judgment in making that decision.

Public Hearing Comment:
Resolution TC26-35:

Cindy Katske of 129 Meadow View Drive was present and spoke against this resolution. Matters pertaining to the budget should be contained in the Charter not in an ordinance. This ordinance upsets the balance of power contained in the Charter regarding adoption of the annual budget. Under this ordinance as written the council can not change the percentage set by the BOF. This doesn't comport with the council's ability to alter line items as set forth in the Charter. We should allow future leaders of the town to their jobs as they see fit instead of tying their hands in this manner.

Public Hearing Commented Ended.

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