

**MINUTES OF THE COMMON COUNCIL
IN SPECIAL SESSION
April 17, 2012**

A special session of the Winchester Common Council was held on Tuesday, April 17, 2012 in the Council Chambers, Rouss City Hall. President Jeffrey Buettner called the meeting to order at 6:50 p.m.

PRESENT: President Jeff Buettner; Councilor Evan Clark, John Hill, John Tagnesi, Les Veach and Ben Weber; Vice-Mayor Milt McInturff; Mayor Elizabeth Minor; Vice-President John Willingham (9)

ABSENT: None (0)

R-2012-23: Retirement of Bill Tumblin
R-2012-24: Retirement of Sandra Jett
R-2012-25: Retirement of John Galloway
R-2012-26: Retirement of Earl Thompson
R-2012-27: Retirement of Hal Christensen

Vice-President Willingham moved to approve the resolutions honoring the retirees. *The motion was seconded by Vice-Mayor McInturff then unanimously approved by voice-vote.*

PUBLIC HEARING

O-2012-08: Second Reading – AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND AND RE-ENACT SECTION 27-10 OF THE WINCHESTER CITY CODE BY CHANGING THE TAX RATE ON REAL PROPERTY FROM EIGHTY-SIX CENTS (\$0.86) FOR EVERY ONE HUNDRED DOLLARS (\$100.00) OF THE ASSESSED VALUE THEREFORE TO NINETY-FIVE CENTS (\$0.95) FOR EVERY ONE HUNDRED DOLLARS (\$100.00) OF THE ASSESSED VALUE THEREFORE

Rick Brown of 1025 Armistead Street spoke against the tax increase. He urged Council to look for other ways to tax in the city. He stated a lower tax increase will bring in more businesses. He also presented Council with 15 pages of signatures against a tax increase.

Emad Botros of 950 Meadow Court spoke in favor of the tax increase. He stated his son is in a class of 27 students and the problem is going to get worse. He supports the teachers and a tax increase for the schools.

Mark Stickley of 324 West Whitlock Avenue spoke against a tax increase. He asked council to find ways to cut spending. He said he talked to a number of people whom said

this tax increase is going to happen regardless. He said with food prices skyrocketing, general taxes coming in January, etc there are ways to cut spending. He asked for Council to implore and look at other ways instead of a tax increase.

Frank Wright of 126 West Cork Street spoke against the tax increase proposal. He stated that since 2005, his tax bill has increased by 58%. The last tax increase was supposed to be running neutral. He stated it doesn't make sense to have a wish list. He suggested increasing the IT budget and cutting in some other areas.

President Buettner asked if anybody else would like to speak to Council on this issue.

Sara Browning spoke in favor of the 9 cent tax increase. She stated her kids are in the public schools. Raising the taxes is not easy for her to say but she doesn't see any other answer.

With no further citizens to address Council on this issue, President Buettner closed the public hearing at 7:04 p.m.

Vice-President Willingham moved to adopt O-2012-08. The motion was seconded by Vice-Mayor McInturff.

Vice-President Willingham has looked at the given list of options, but after having gone through this and asking 100 questions, it is evident a tax increase needs to be done. He said we are 11 cents behind and there are projects we are funding that we never paid for. This tax increase would mean more money for schools and this would be our opportunity to fund it. With budgets and priorities and what you believe in, at some point you have to pay for what you committed to, like Handley High School. He said he supports the 9 cents tax increase.

Councilor Tagnesi said he feels the teachers need a raise and he's disappointed the city spent all the money on John Handley and have not already paid for it. He said as much as he doesn't want to raise taxes, he supports it.

Councilor Weber said since he's the new kid on the block, he's faced with the same problem and following through with commitments. He said we all have to make adjustments. He said he cannot support the 9 cent increase, Ward 3, just like everyone else will be hit hard. He complimented staff for breaking out the costs. He said he has an issue with the 9 cents tax increase and believes we can do better.

Mayor Minor agrees with Councilor Weber and cannot support the 9 cent tax increase. She said she spoke with some people and could not foresee this being done, with the economy like it is now. She said it is way out of line and a 9 cent tax increase is too high. She said in times like these, she cannot vote for a 9 cents tax increase.

Councilor Clark said it all boils down to a question of maintenance. He said when he first came to the city he knew things were going to wear out and they would need to be

replaced before they break and not after. He said we are going to have to raise taxes because there is a need for it. He said we have to fulfill our commitments and have a good and civic public service. He said he has heartburn when he looks at the 9 cents tax increase, but he would support a lower tax increase.

Councilor Hill supports a tax increase because education is important. However, a 9 cents tax increase seems steep. He wants to support the schools, but would have a hard time supporting the schools with a high tax increase.

Councilor Veach said as a liaison to the Schoolboard, he has special insight and sees how they are struggling across the board. He said he is behind the schools in any way he can. He said it can be paid forward to the next generation and the generation after that. He said he has heartburn with the 9 cents tax increase. He said he would support a tax increase that would give the educators a pay raise.

President Buettner said he looked at Council's priorities and all three of those priorities have been affected. He said we cannot be a great community without a great school system. He said what they did with Handley High School was necessary and the easy thing is to say we are not going to raise taxes. He supports the 9 cents tax increase.

There was a brief discussion about giving the teachers a raise and what tax increase bracket that would be under.

Councilor Clark moved to approve a 6 cents tax increase. *The motion was seconded by Councilor Weber and defeated with President Buettner, Mayor Minor, Vice-President Willingham, Vice-Mayor McInturff, and Councilors Tagnesi and Veach voting in the negative.*

O-2012-08 was seconded then adopted by the affirmative roll-call vote of a majority of all members of the Common Council, the ayes and nays being recorded as shown below:

<u>MEMBER</u>	<u>VOTE</u>
Councilor Clark	Aye
Councilor Hill	Aye
Vice-Mayor McInturff	Aye
Mayor Minor	Nay
Councilor Tagnesi	Aye
Councilor Veach	Aye
Councilor Weber	Nay
Vice-President Willingham	Aye
President Buettner	Aye

ADJOURNMENT

Councilor Clark moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:27 p.m. *The motion was seconded by Mayor Minor than unanimously approved by voice-vote.*

Kari J. Van Diest
Deputy Clerk of the Common Council