

MINUTES OF A SPECIAL MEETING AND PUBLIC HEARINGS OF THE  
MAYOR AND BOARD OF ALDERMEN  
TOWN OF CHAPEL HILL, MUNICIPAL BUILDING  
MONDAY, JUNE 4, 1979  
7:30 P.M.

Mayor Wallace called the meeting to order. Present were:

Gerald Cohen  
R. D. Smith  
Beverly Kawalec  
Jonathan Howes  
Edward Vickery  
Robert Epting  
Bill Thorpe  
Marilyn Boulton

Also present were Town Manager E. Shipman and Town Attorney E. Denny.

Public Hearing--General Revenue Sharing

Mr. Shipman requested Ms. Parker summarize the Revenue Sharing Fund as proposed in the 1979-80 Manager's Recommended Budget. After presenting a brief summary of the fund, Ms. Parker noted that should UMTA money not be available for urban mass transit assistance, revenue sharing funds would be transferred to transportation for operating assistance through budget amendment for which a public hearing would be necessary. Ms. Parker stated that the two items earmarked to alleviate the possible transportation fund deficiency were two contributions to the capital improvement fund totalling \$112,855 and a reduction in the contribution to the general fund of \$100,000. Alderman Smith asked if, through such an action, the transportation fund balance would be sufficient to support proposed transportation programs. Ms. Parker answered that adjustments would have to be made in the transportation budget.

There being no further comments concerning the Revenue Sharing Fund, the Public Hearing on the matter was adjourned and attention was turned to the Operating Budget.

Public Hearing--Operating Budget

Mayor Wallace opened the Public Hearing for the Operating Budget and Mr. Shipman requested comments from citizens, noting that the hearing provided a second opportunity for citizens to express preferences. Alderman Smith questioned whether the proposed budget in the areas of Human Services and Recreation reflected the Town's priorities. Mr. Shipman stated that it was not clear where the focus and thrust of these priorities ought be and that measurable objectives could not be identified at this point. He stressed that improvements would be made during the year which would be reflected in the quarterly reports. Alderman Boulton stated that the budget did not reflect that objectives were to be identified and her feeling was that it should. Mr. Shipman agreed that it should be reflected. Alderman Epting stated that it was not accurate to suggest that teen needs were not met in the proposed budget and that Human Services and Recreation should not be perceived as separate categories when considering the reflection of Town priorities.

Mayor Wallace called for questions and/or comments from citizens. Mr. Jacques Menache of The Art School stated that a grant for cultural events had been processed through all appropriate channels and that the proposed budget did not recommend the application of funds for this project. He asked whether or not the Recreation Department was concerned with the production of art and its promotion, whether or not the Town of Chapel Hill endorsed the production of art, and why, since the need for such a program had been proven through five years of successful operation, the Town did not recognize the need for such a program through funding. He felt this was a responsibility of the Town. Alderman Kawalec asked about the amount and nature of the request. Mr. Menache responded that the request for \$2,450 was to be used to initiate an art series (Chapel Hill Cultural Artists) which would include a public theatre presentation, a dance performance, a concert, an art showing, a film, and a poetry reading. He noted that these would be money producing activities and that proceeds would be earmarked for reinvestment to provide eventual self-sustenance. Alderman Kawalec questioned whether such a grant would be used to improve the facilities at the Carr Mill Mall. Mr. Menache answered that the funds would be used for programming rather than capital improvements. Alderman Smith stated that the Town did allocate funds for "art" and that the Recreation Department could do what they would with recreation's allocated funds. He stated that therefore, it was not

accurate to say the Town was not contributing to "art." He questioned whether Recreation Department sponsored art programs served all needs of the community in this area. Alderman Vickery noted that there were other such programs in the Town which were self-supporting and that support resources were available other than Town funds. He mentioned that he was sympathetic to the community's cultural needs, but that he would have to be convinced that a significant segment of the population would benefit from such an allocation of funds. Mr. Menache stated that the funds would be used not for a program of classes and activities but for a series of "products." He recognized that the University had a significant cultural program but that it did not meet the needs of non-University citizens. He felt that a need for such a program was apparent when the track record of the Art School was examined. Alderman Boulton felt these points should be considered, and recommended the Recreation Commission examine Mr. Menache's request. Alderman Howes asked if Alderman Boulton supported the request. Alderman Boulton responded that a need for such a program would have to be established. Alderman Kawalec recalled that the Fine Arts Festival had received a Town grant. She felt a separate organization such as Mr. Menache's was good and that it would be appropriate to support the Art School. Alderman Vickery expressed his puzzlement at the operating budget's lack of clear statements of objectives from the Human Services Department. He stated a need for more specific objectives. Alderman Epting, prefacing his statement by reporting he had served on the Art School Board, noted that a different level of people patronized the Art School. He felt that, dollar per dollar, the Town's money would be well spent since it would produce performances from which so many would benefit. Alderman Howes agreed, stating that the Art School appeared to fill a cultural gap in the community. He then stated that because there were so many worthy programs it was difficult to determine which filled gaps and that the absence of specific policy compounded the difficulty of decision making. Alderman Cohen made the point, with which Mayor Wallace agreed, that the purpose of the meeting was to hear the comments and opinions of the public rather than those of the Board of Aldermen.

Mr. Landsberg made the general comment that she felt the Town of Chapel Hill had the responsibility of providing leadership in the support of human services. Mr. Egan then voiced his support of Town funding for the Art School. He stated that the Art School served all levels of people both in Chapel Hill and Carrboro, particularly non-University affiliated citizens. He realized that all funding requests could not be granted, but added that this project was especially worthy. He noted that the request was for a small amount and that it would produce something people could do.

Ms. Mulvihill then spoke to the question of the need for human services funding. She stated that her concern stemmed from the change in direction of the Human Services Department. She then presented her case for financial support of the Child Services Coordinator position, noting the coordinator had served a growing need in the community for a significant cross-section of the community. She stated that the position existed for the purpose of directing citizens to the proper agencies and services, and this could not be done at the county level. She suggested the Board of Aldermen reconsider funding the position which served a need that was not met elsewhere. Ms. Cross also supported the coordinator position. She thanked the Board for funding the position for the past several years, noting the position had provided a valuable service in supporting families and making resources available to them. She then stressed the difficulty of obtaining child care in Chapel Hill and urged the Board to make the coordinator position part of the Town. Alderman Vickery asked for specifics of the coordinator function. Ms. Cross answered that the coordinator had the ability to refer, gave clear ideas of what to look for in good child care, acted as a clearinghouse, and developed valuable programs such as OASIS and the toy lending library. Alderman Cohen questioned whether or not a full-time person was necessary to fill the position. Ms. Cross responded that a part-time coordinator working year-round would be preferable to a full-time coordinator working half-year but that she felt a full-time, year-round coordinator was necessary to meet all the needs which existed. Alderman Smith mentioned the RSVP program which coordinated and staffed the college information center at the high school. He noted that the present police facilities would soon be vacated and suggested that facility be utilized to coordinate a child care program under the resources available within the RSVP program. He also noted his involvement with teenagers over the past 37 years, stating that teens usually don't want what we want for them. He stated that it would require a deliberate effort on the part of the staff to develop a program for teens. Ms. Mulvihill felt Alderman Smith's idea of utilizing the talents of senior citizens was a good one but stressed the need for someone to coordinate such a volunteer program. She then noted that the coordinator position had been originally established as a result of a Mayor's Task Force which had considered the problem several years ago. She asked why the Town would stop funding now when it had originally responded to the need for such a coordinator. Alderman Smith noted that the college information center was coordinated by a senior citizen volunteer. Ms. Bridgers stated she had been a director of day care centers for 17 years and that a full-time coordinator was necessary. She mentioned Governor Hunt's recent support of interagency coordination. Ms. Thompson stated a volunteer

coordinator would not be sufficient, citing professional administration requirements for grant application, audits, and other duties requiring a professional. Alderman Cohen mentioned that many retired citizens possess such professional skills. Ms. Thompson again stressed the need for a professional coordinator. Alderman Smith expressed the need to identify professionals among the senior citizen population. He requested the Human Services Department obtain a breakdown of these professionals among senior citizens.

Mayor Wallace called for additional comments from citizens. Bert Gurganus, a Town employee, stated that the proposed 5% increase was not sufficient. He stated that he understood the importance of staying inflation, but that the Federal Administration had admitted it must re-examine the 7% guidelines. He noted that Chapel Hill employees were paid less than other governmental employees in the Triangle area. He mentioned that buying power had decreased by 15% over the past five years and that 47% of Town employees earned less than the Department of Labor's lower standard of living figure. He requested the Board approve an increase for Town employees of at least 7%. Chris Carlson, a Town bus driver for 5 years, stated that she earned less than a starting bus driver in Raleigh and that after six months' service, a Durham bus driver also earned more than she did. She noted Mr. Shipman's position that a higher cost-of-living increase would necessitate a trade-off with fringe benefits. She stated employees required a higher cost-of-living increase and current levels of fringe benefits. She felt Town employees should take top priority. She expressed her feeling that the money was available and questioned such items in the proposed budget as \$7,000 for jogging uniforms for the Fire Department, and the \$123,000 allocated for "professional services." She stated that inflation hits the lowest paid first and urged the Board of Aldermen to search the budget and identify funds for employee salary increase. Iris Schwintzer, a Town bus driver, noted that the initial request for 10% had been signed by 200 Town employees. She expressed her concern that the employee roster had become top heavy with too many administrative positions. She specifically noted the budget request for an additional personnel officer. She stated that Chapel Hill had one officer for every 73 employees, Raleigh had one for every 208, and Durham had one for every 170. She questioned the need for another one. Alderman Thorpe agreed the Town had too many administrative positions. He stated his concern over the premature advertising of the position. Mr. Shipman explained that the advertisement stipulated approval of the position. Alderman Thorpe again expressed his dismay that the position had been advertised prior to Board approval. Alderman Cohen noted that the staff had responded to Board complaints of past years that programs had not been initiated soon enough following Board approval. Alderman Thorpe disagreed, stating he felt the position could be filled immediately following approval. Mayor Wallace stated that the deadline for applying for the position was June 4, and that applicants may have applied for a non-existent position if the Board does not approve it.

Alderman Cohen questioned why the Board had such difficulty in granting pay increases. He noted the apparent unwillingness of the Board to carry out the mandates of the voters expressed through referenda. He stated his willingness to raise taxes when the voters had approved such action. He asked the Board to examine the results of such action and consider the consequences. Alderman Vickery then requested the Manager provide computations establishing the real value of current tax dollars as opposed to the value in 1967. Alderman Epting agreed this information was required by the Board. He mentioned this was the information most often requested of him by taxpayers.

Mr. Shipman, referring to the question of the additional personnel officer, stated that the situation was as Alderman Cohen had described and that the advertising had been done to facilitate recruiting. Alderman Howes stated that the position had been exposed as controversial during a Board work session and he felt it would have been the better part of wisdom, in this particular case, not to proceed with advertising the position. Mr. Shipman stated that the staff had felt the position to be safe and not subject to controversy. Alderman Thorpe expressed his concern that the Town staff had become too top heavy. Alderman Cohen stated that he was leaning against approval of the position but that he felt advertising, even of a controversial position, was not uncalled for and did not cost anything. Alderman Smith noted that it had been policy to advertise prior to approval in the past. He stated that the Board should state a definite policy in regard to this matter rather than complaining "after the fact".

There being no further comments concerning the Operating Budget, the Public Hearing on the matter was adjourned and attention was turned to the Capital Improvements Program.

Public Hearing--Capital Improvements Program

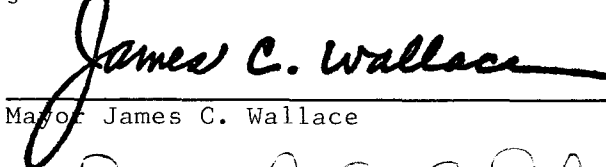
Mayor Wallace called for comments from the audience. There being none, Alderman Smith expressed his concern over the number of programs requesting funding. He asked whether some of the programs could be included in a bond referendum rather than funded with current appropriations. Mr. Hooper answered that this could be done. He mentioned the staff had attempted to stretch the dollars from the 1976 bond referendum. He stated that current levels of inflation had added a new dimension to the uses of tax dollars, noting that the Police/Courts facility, originally estimated at \$1.4 million, had spiralled to a \$2.1 million facility. He then stated that it was more economical to utilize the cash fund when possible rather than bond referenda because the actual cost of the latter was \$1.50 as opposed to an actual cost of \$1.00 when cash funds were used.

Alderman Howes questioned the logic of delaying the Advanced Land Acquisition Project three years. Mr. Hooper answered that the staff proposed delaying this project until completion of current recreational projects and until an assessment of recreational impacts of the Jordan Lake development could be obtained.

Mr. Egan asked if the figure proposed for vehicle replacement included federal matching funds. Mayor Wallace answered affirmatively. Mr. Egan then asked whether stipulations for the federal matching funds included transbus restrictions. Alderman Cohen answered that the Town would be stuck with restrictions but that an analysis had shown that such improvements for the handicapped were not economical. Mr. Godding responded that the transbus program was in limbo. He stated that the 504 regulations did require fully accessible vehicles and it appeared that federal money could be used to purchase accessible vehicles only. Alderman Cohen noted that goals had been confused by the regulations. He mentioned that he felt using the present easy rider program was more economical than providing all existing and new buses with lifts. Mr. Godding concluded that the new federal regulations concerning accessibility were, in fact, very confusing.

Alderman Smith then approached the question of park/ride lots. He questioned whether the demand was great enough to justify the expenditures. Mr. Godding reported use figures for the Kroger Plaza and University Airport lots. He stated that final recommendations from the Park/Ride Study Committee had not been submitted but that its completed report would help clarify the question. Alderman Howes noted the informal park/ride lot on Airport Road across from the Ranch House. He also noted the enormous change which would be taking place at the University this year with the closing of the Union parking lot. Alderman Cohen stated his concern that the level of service dictated use levels of the park/ride lots. He felt this was a self-fulfilling prophecy and that more buses should be provided rather than less lots. Warren Collier, a representative of the UNC student government, then made a request for year-round service to Carrboro. He expressed his concern over the operation of bus services for next year. Alderman Cohen responded that the Town's request for an operating assistance grant from the State had not yet been approved but he felt sure Carrboro would receive summer service next year. Alderman Epting asked if a figure for annual rental of the informal Airport Road lot was known. Aldermen Howes and Cohen felt the Town should encourage the public to utilize the lot further out of town. Alderman Epting agreed that the matter may not be worth pursuing, but stated that it might be wise to act on people's perception of convenience. Mr. Denny stated he would require further direction from the Board before pursuing this matter. Alderman Cohen felt since there was already a 500 space lot to the north of town that attention should be turned to a lot or rental of a lot to the south of town. Alderman Kawalec mentioned the use of the lot at Slugs at the Pines. Alderman Vickery stated that a lesson should be taken from consumer behavior in the placement of park/ride lots and that rental of lots and increased bus service to existing lots would appear to be cheaper than additional lots or the widening of roads.

There being no further business to come before the Board, it was decided to adjourn to executive work session. Following the executive session, the meeting was adjourned.

  
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 Mayor James C. Wallace

  
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 Town Clerk David B. Roberts