

*A Special Meeting of the 26<sup>th</sup> Board of Representatives of the City of Stamford will be held Monday, May 9, 2005 at 8:00 p.m. in the Legislative Chambers of the Board of Representatives in the Government Center, 888 Washington Boulevard, Stamford, Connecticut.*

# Minutes

**CALL TO ORDER:** The meeting was called to order at 9:25 p.m. by President David R. Martin.

**INVOCATION:** By Representative O'Neill

“Dear Lord of all, as we gather here tonight in this peaceful place in the heart of our fine City, let us reflect for a moment on the sacrifices made by so many others so that we are able to enjoy these freedoms that we so often take for granted. Let us pause to remember that on this day sixty years ago, Americans celebrated the end of war with Germany. Let us pray that the noble spirit of all those brave souls who fought and died on foreign fields and distant waters will always be cherished. We pray to our God that they rest in peace always. Amen”

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG:** Led by President David R. Martin.

**ROLL CALL:** Conducted by Clerk of the Board Annie M. Summerville. There were thirty-eight members present and two excused: Reps. McCullen and Nowakowski.

**VOTING MACHINE STATUS:** The machine was in good working order.

**CALL OF THE MEETING:** President Martin read the Call of the Meeting:

“I, David R. Martin, President of the 26<sup>th</sup> Board of Representatives of the City of Stamford, Connecticut, and pursuant to Section C2-10-4 of the Stamford Charter,

hereby call a Special Meeting of said Board of Representatives at the following time and place:

Monday, May 9, 2005  
8:00 p.m.  
Legislative Chambers, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Government Center  
888 Washington Boulevard  
Stamford, CT 06904-2152

to consider and act upon the following:

1. Operating, Capital, E.G. Brennan Fund, Grants and Police Extra Duty Fund, Risk Management Fund, Smith House Fund, WPCA Fund and Parking Fund Budgets for the fiscal year 2005/2006, as transmitted by the Board of Finance on April 15, 2005, pursuant to provisions of Section C8-30-7 of the Stamford Charter; and RESOLUTIONS associated therewith.”

**BUDGET PRESENTATION:** Randall Skigen, Chair, Fiscal Committee

Chair Skigen thanked the members of his committee: Vice Chair Cannady and Member Representatives Day, DePina, Giordano, DeLuca, Fedeli, Figueroa, Lyons, Hunter and Mirkin. He added that the work was in an open and friendly environment and in a bipartisan manner. Each member of the committee took on subcommittee assignments and met with various departments and spent a lot of time going through the budget. Rep. Skigen hoped that the members of the Board agree with the results of the Committee.

Chair Skigen reported that the Fiscal Committee met several times during March and April. The complete list of dates and attendance at all Fiscal Committee meetings is available through the Clerk of the Board.

Chair Skigen reported that on Thursday, May 5 the Committee met for deliberations. Present at that meeting were Committee Members: Skigen, Cannady, Day, Deluca, DePina, Fedeli, Giordano, Figueroa, Hunter, Lyons and Mirkin. Also present were: Clerk of the Board Annie Summerville; Rep. Rauh; Peter Privitera, Director of OPM; and Ben Barnes, Director of Administration.

Chair Skigen stated the Committee began by going through the initiatives the Mayor proposed in the budget and in the Mayor’s budget message. Chair Skigen reported that there was no opposition by any Committee members to the initiatives, and that the initiatives are beneficial to the citizens of Stamford. They

include: moving the revaluation process in house; new housing safety and zoning code enforcement activity; restoring hazardous material drop off day; restoring curbside bulky waste pick up; funding for school readiness; funding for the Glenbrook Community Center; adding staff to the Town Clerk’s office; adding a building inspector; and the preservation of a public health community nurse who was formerly paid by a grant.

Chair Skigen also thanked Mr. Privitera and Mr. Barnes for their help and response throughout the process, adding they were terrific and this couldn’t have been completed without them.

Chair Skigen stated he will go through the list of cuts that the Committee recommended and make a single motion to accept the operating budget. Then the Board of Education, WPCA and other special funds budgets will be taken up as separate votes.

President Martin stated that usually the board goes through each department reviewing each recommendation page by page, and asked the Majority and Minority leaders if it is, in fact, acceptable to consider the City operating budget as one motion. Both leaders concurred.

***Operating Budget***

Majority Leader Boccuzzi moved to accept the Operating Budget with reductions as recommended by the Fiscal Committee; Minority Leader DeLuca seconded said motion. (President Martin noted that this would NOT include the Board of Education budget or the Fiscal Committee’s recommended reduction.)

Chair Skigen read the reductions to the Operating Budget into the record:

<b>Budget Page</b>	<b>Motion</b>	<b>Committee Vote</b>
46	<i>Office of Administration Grants Administration \$4,000 reduction from Professional Consultants</i>	<b>APPROVED 6-4-0</b> (Reps. Day, DeLuca, Fedeli, Hunter, Lyons and Mirkin in favor; Reps. Skigen, Cannady, Figueroa and Giordano opposed)
59	<i>Office of Administration Property Revaluation \$19,597 reduction from Salaries; \$1,499 social security reduction</i>	<b>APPROVED 8-2-0</b> (Reps. Skigen, Day, DeLuca, Fedeli, Giordano, Hunter, Lyons and Mirkin in favor; Reps. Cannady and Figueroa opposed)
69	<i>Office of Administration</i>	<b>APPROVED 6-4-0</b> (Reps. Cannady, Day, DeLuca, Fedeli, Lyons and Mirkin in favor;

	<i>Technology Management</i> \$18,061 reduction from Salaries; \$1,382 social security reduction	Reps. Skigen, Figueroa, Giordano and Hunter opposed)
85	<i>Office of Operations Traffic Maintenance</i> \$39,000 reduction from Seasonal; \$2,984 Social Security reduction	<b>APPROVED 10-0-0</b> (Reps. Skigen, Cannady, Day, DeLuca, Fedeli, Figueroa, Giordano, Hunter, Lyons and Mirkin in favor)
98	<i>Office of Operations Vehicle Maintenance</i> \$7,202 reduction from Salary; \$551 Social Security reduction	<b>APPROVED 11-0-0</b> (Reps. Skigen, Cannady, Day, DeLuca, DePina, Fedeli, Figueroa, Giordano, Hunter, Lyons and Mirkin in favor)
76	<i>Office of Operations Public Services Admin.</i> \$11,405 General Budget reduction	<b>APPROVED 7-4-0</b> (Reps. Cannady, Day, DeLuca, Fedeli, Hunter, Lyons and Mirkin in favor; Reps. Skigen, DePina, Figueroa and Giordano opposed)
199	<i>Police Department Department Wide</i> \$125,000 reduction from Overtime; \$453 Social Security reduction	<b>APPROVED 9-2-0</b> (Reps. Skigen, Cannady, Day, DeLuca, Fedeli, Figueroa, Hunter, Lyons and Mirkin in favor; Reps. DePina and Giordano opposed)
223	<i>Big Five Volunteer Fire Glenbrook</i> \$10,000 reduction from Overtime; \$73 Social Security reduction	<b>APPROVED 6-5-0</b> (Reps. Skigen, Cannady, Day, DeLuca, Fedeli and Lyons in favor; Reps. DePina, Figueroa, Giordano, Hunter and Mirkin opposed)
225	<i>Big Five Volunteer Fire Belltown</i> \$10,000 reduction from Overtime; \$73 Social Security reduction	<b>APPROVED 11-0-0</b> (Reps. Skigen, Cannady, Day, DeLuca, DePina, Fedeli, Figueroa, Giordano, Hunter, Lyons and Mirkin in favor)
227	<i>Big Five Volunteer Fire TOR</i> \$20,000 reduction from Overtime; \$145 Social Security reduction	<b>APPROVED 11-0-0</b> (Reps. Skigen, Cannady, Day, DeLuca, DePina, Fedeli, Figueroa, Giordano, Hunter, Lyons and Mirkin in favor)
232	<i>Stamford Fire Department</i>	<b>APPROVED 10-1-0</b> (Reps. Skigen,

	\$25,000 reduction from Overtime; \$181 Social Security reduction	Cannady, Day, DeLuca, DePina, Fedeli, Figueroa, Hunter, Lyons and Mirkin in favor; Rep. Giordano opposed)
294	<i>Government Services Board of Representatives</i> \$3,500 General Budget Reduction	<b>APPROVED 10-1-0</b> (Reps. Skigen, Cannady, Day, DeLuca, Fedeli, Figueroa, Giordano, Hunter, Lyons and Mirkin in favor; Rep. DePina opposed)
298	<i>Government Services Board of Finance</i> \$10,000 General Budget reduction	<b>APPROVED 11-0-0</b> (Reps. Skigen, Cannady, Day, DeLuca, DePina, Fedeli, Figueroa, Giordano, Hunter, Lyons and Mirkin in favor)
308	<i>Government Services Registrar of Voters</i> \$10,000 reduction in Seasonal; \$765 Social Security reduction	<b>APPROVED 11-0-0</b> (Reps. Skigen, Cannady, Day, DeLuca, DePina, Fedeli, Figueroa, Giordano, Hunter, Lyons and Mirkin in favor)
N/A	<i>Insurance Reserve Fund</i> \$215,000 reduction in	<b>APPROVED 11-0-0</b> (Reps. Skigen, Cannady, Day, DeLuca, DePina, Fedeli, Figueroa, Giordano, Hunter, Lyons and Mirkin in favor)
N/A	<i>Debt Service Account</i> \$15,000 amending to above motion	<b>APPROVED 7-4-0</b> (Reps. Cannady, Day, DeLuca, DePina, Fedeli, Lyons and Mirkin in favor; Reps. Skigen, Figueroa, Giordano and Hunter opposed)
401	<i>Medical &amp; Life</i> \$215,000 reduction	<b>APPROVED 11-0-0</b> (Reps. Skigen, Cannady, Day, DeLuca, DePina, Fedeli, Figueroa, Giordano, Hunter, Lyons and Mirkin in favor)

Rep. Zelinsky stated he would like to go on official record as not being in favor of the city hiring a professional consultant at \$20,000, which has now been reduced to \$16,000. He believes our State delegation can do whatever is needed to help Stamford, adding he believes this is a waste of taxpayers' money (note: Item is on Page 46). Also, Rep Zelinsky stated he does not agree with the \$125,000 police department reduction in overtime (Page 199). Rep. Zelinsky stated he will not make any motions at this time.

Rep Martin stated that in recent discussions with the Ethics Board he asked whether he should vote on the Board of Education Budget, since his wife is a teacher. That Commission reviewed the Ethics ordinance and concluded that he should not vote on the Board of Education budget. Rep Martin stated he will comply with that recommendation. Rep. Martin stated that using the same logic could lead some to conclude that if you are a city employee you shouldn't be

voting on the entire City budget. He stated that there is no ethics ruling on this, and he doesn't know if this is a smart way to do government, but anyone who feels he/she has a potential conflict could abstain and that representatives should use their own judgment.

The motion (on the Operating Budget) was approved by a machine vote of 34-0-2 (Note: Reps. Giordano and White left the floor for this vote) (See [Vote Record No. 616](#)).

Rep Skigen stated that the next item taken up by the Fiscal Committee was the Board of Education Budget on page 324 of the Budget book. The Committee voted for a \$500,000 reduction on top of the \$5,338,000 made by the Board of Finance; Rep Skigen moved for adoption of the Board of Education Budget. Said motion was seconded.

*(Note Reps. Martin, White and Clear left the floor of the Board for the discussion and vote on the Board of Education budget)*

Page	<i>Board of Education</i>	<b>Committee Vote</b>
324	\$500,000 reduction	<b>APPROVED 6-5-0</b> (Reps. Day, DeLuca, Fedeli, Hunter, Lyons and Mirkin in favor; Reps. Skigen, Cannady, DePina, Figueroa and Giordano opposed)

Rep. O'Neill stated he is opposed to this cut, adding that there is a crisis in education in the City of Stamford with approximately 30% of our high school students failing to graduate. Rep. O'Neill added that Stamford is at a crossroads with a new superintendent coming in, and the Board should give him the benefit of the doubt to make adjustments that address the needs of the students. By making this cut, the Board would probably have the effect of cutting teacher aides for those who need remedial help as well as cutting back on the extraordinary learners programs thereby depriving students. Rep. O'Neill added that nothing good will come out of this \$500,000 cut, and asked all representatives to pause and think of the consequences of the Board's action before it votes on this additional cut.

Rep. Zelinsky stated that the Board of Finance cut the outrageous amount of \$5,338,000 from the Board of Education, and added that the vote was three in favor and three abstentions. There was no rationale where the cuts should come from. Rep. Zelinsky added that this cut will probably hurt our students, teachers, and teachers' aides, and he urged his colleagues not to cut any more money from the Board of Education budget.

Rep. Hunter stated he proposed the \$500,000 cut in committee because three years ago (when he first got involved with the Fiscal Committee) the Board of Education Budget was virtually incomprehensible. He couldn't understand the

budget, and as a consequence the Education and Fiscal Committees got together with the Board Education and with the help of the Stamford Public Education Foundation and developed a set of guidelines for a budget that could be read and understood by this board as well as taxpayers and citizens of this City. Taxpayers and citizens needed to understand where this money is going and how it is being spent and whether it is being spent wisely.

Rep. Hunter added that the elected Board of Education has done an outstanding job producing a budget under very adverse circumstances, and these adverse circumstances are that the central staff of the Board of Education has paid no attention to any of the recommendations of the Fiscal Committee, the Education Committee or the Stamford Education Foundation. He added that both Representative Deluca and he asked the central staff to use the City budget as a model for preparing this year's budget, which they did not do. Nor did they tell the President of the Board about the Stamford Public Education Foundation Report, nor did they disclose the Board of Finance Report. Rep Hunter thinks the central staff needs to pay attention to the people who are responsible to the voters of this community, and who are up for election in November. This is why he made the proposed budget cut as a way to get their attention.

Rep. Hunter stated that the cut can be absorbed easily if the central staff pays attention to those students who are not residents of Stamford; adding there are approximately 132 students who are not residents. It cost the city \$12,600 per year per student. This would equal approximately \$1,067,000, therefore if the central staff does one third or a little less of their job in finding these students and freeing up that classroom space for the students who live in Stamford, the \$500,000 will be covered.

Rep. Lyons states that he supported this cut in Committee as it is imperative that the elected members of the Board of Education demand that financial transparency, financial accountability and financial responsibility be just as important as educational responsibility. He stated that we are in a situation in the City of Stamford where we are looking at an approximate \$190,000,000 Board of Education Budget. If you take the City side of operations, with its' debt service payments, it doesn't even come close to that amount. Stamford taxpayers, seniors, residents and others need to know that the largest expenditure in city government is being accurately, judiciously and prudently spent on our children. He stated there is a group of people in the elected body of government who do not believe that these Boards are serious when they ask for materials or financial information presented in a different manner.

Representative Diamond stated that we have built a model city for the rest of Connecticut, and that the one thing people are going to ask before moving to Stamford is about the schools. If they feel positive about the schools and property values they will come to Stamford. The Board of Finance has cut the Board of Education budget substantially. The Board of Education has identified

several goals that it would like to see met. Rep. Diamond added that these objectives or goals will not be met if the budget is cut by another \$500,000. He stated that with respect to Rep. Hunter's comments, he doesn't believe it's the Board's job to get the attention of the Board of Education; it's the Board's job to finance an excellent educational system. Therefore, Rep. Diamond urged that the Board reject this cut.

Rep. Figueroa stated that when she first heard of the cut she was against it, because she understood the purpose of the cut was to send a message to the Board of Education. However, by making this additional cut she doesn't think that the Board of Education will be forced to provide this Board with a more readable budget. She added that this cut is being used to punish the Board of Education, without taking into consideration the effect on children and teachers. Therefore, she encourages everybody to reject the cut.

Rep. Skigen stated that he met with members of the Board of Finance the night they made their cuts, and he asked where they thought that \$5,338,000 should come from. Their answer was up to \$2,000,000 could come from insurance savings and \$500,000 from special education (based on the special education audit). When he asked about the additional \$3,000,000, they had no answer. He stated even if you accept Rep. Hunter's assertion that there are 132 kids that don't belong in they system, they are still \$1,400,000 short of meeting the number that the Board of Education has been cut by the Board of Finance.

Rep. Skigen added that if we do not provide the best educational system possible, not only are the children hurt, but the City and its property values will hurt. He stated that if your paying \$10,000 in taxes, which would mean you have a million dollar home, then you will save about \$15 a year based on this cut. The impact on our educational system and property values is not worth that savings. He urged everyone to vote against the \$500,000 cut.

Rep. Boccuzzi stated he's going to vote against this cut to the Board of Education, and that this will be the first time that he's not in favor of a cut to the Board of Education.

Rep. Boccuzzi added that he didn't think that you could take any more money out of the Board of Education. Last year he was concerned as to what would happen with the surplus, and this year the approximately \$1.3 million surplus will go back to the general fund. He also hopes that the Board of Education does not draw this number down to zero, and he is watching that surplus closely.

The motion **FAILED** by a machine vote of 5-30-0 (See [Vote Record No. 617](#)).



## **WPCA**

Chair Skigen stated that the Committee voted for a \$50,000 cut to the WPCA, by a vote of 11-0-0. Chair Skigen moved this item.

Rep. Boccuzzi moved to cut \$100,000 from the WPCA; said motion was seconded and approved by unanimous voice vote.

## ***Capital Budget***

Chair Skigen stated that the Committee recommended one cut in the amount of \$200,000 for the Palace Theater (Page 31) Restoration. Chair Skigen moved the reduction; said motion was seconded and approved by unanimous voice vote.

## ***Resolutions***

Chair Skigen read the Resolution approving the Operating Budget in the amount of \$369,569,728 (including the Board of Education budget) into the record and moved said resolution. The motion was seconded and approved by a voice vote (Reps. Martin, Franzetti, Clear, White, Munger and Giordano abstaining).

Clerk of the Board noted that Rep. Munger had left the meeting (10:20 p.m.).

Chair Skigen read the Resolution approving the E.G. Brennan Fund (\$1,069,768); the Grants, Police Extra Duty and Marinas Operating Fund (\$12,451,542); the Parking Fund (\$2,310,886); the Risk Management Fund (\$38,244,772); the Smith House Fund (\$10,812,972); and the WPCA (\$16,006,035) into the record and moved said resolution. The motion was seconded and approved by a voice vote (Rep. Franzetti abstaining).

Chair Skigen read the Resolution approving the City's Capital Budget (\$111,914,621) into the record and moved said resolution. The motion was seconded and approved by voice vote (Rep. Coppola abstaining).

Chair Skigen read the Resolution approving the WPCA Capital Budget (\$1,175,000) into the record and moved said resolution. The motion was seconded and approved by a unanimous voice vote.

Chair Skigen stated it was a pleasure to deal with the Fiscal Committee, Peter Privitera and Ben Barnes. He states he appreciates everyone's hard work.

Rep. DeLuca stated that in addition to Peter Privitera and Ben Barnes, he would like to thank Noelle Romsey, Joyce Sun and Ozzie Lewis for attending late meetings, answering questions and making revisions.

## **COMMUNICATIONS**

## **OLD BUSINESS**

## **NEW BUSINESS**

## **ADJOURNMENT**

Upon motion duly made and seconded and approved by unanimous voice vote, the meeting was adjourned at 10:26 p.m.