

**TARRYWILE PARK AUTHORITY**  
**SPECIAL MEETING**

June 17, 2009

**CALL TO ORDER:**

On Wednesday, June 17, 2009 at 7:42 p.m., a special meeting of the Tarrywile Park Authority, was called to order at Tarrywile Mansion, 70 Southern Blvd., Danbury, CT, by Vice-Chairman T. Cutsumpas.

**ATTENDANCE**

The following board members were recorded as present:

**Board Members:** R. McGarrigal, J. Preston, B. Talarico, D. Manacek & T. Cutsumpas

**Board Members Absent:** M. Marcus, J. Harner, W. Platz & M. Repole

**Park Staff Present:** S. Moy

**Guests:** B. Petro & R. Gunn

**AGENDA:**

- 1. 2009-2010 Budget:** M. Repole was unable to make tonight's meeting because of a previous commitment. She shared her views with the Authority via a typed letter that was passed out to all the Board members.

The Board began the discussion with the items from last night that were under debate. On page 2 of the proposed budget, the staff stated that with the current economic state, they didn't feel that a \$65,000 proposed income from the Mansion was obtainable. Discussion followed. D. Manacek noted that since the Mansion rental income was around \$64,000 this year, he felt that you should always try to better your sales from the previous year and encouraged staff to try more aggressive marketing to meet the goal. S. Moy did note that there is no increase in the budget to do any additional advertising and that there has never been a marketing plan for the Mansion. R. McGarrigal stated that the Board would help with a marketing plan. The website/vendor income is listed at \$5,000. Even though this program is still being developed, the Website Committee felt it was a reachable goal. In reference to the Camp Building/ Red Barn Income being listed at \$5,000, T. Cutsumpas felt that either building could be used for an independent day camp. S. Moy brought up the concerns that M. Repole had brought up at last night's meeting that the Camp Building would need extensive renovations to be used and even the Red Barn may need improvements to host a day camp and to meet the town and/or state compliances and rules for a day camp. S. Moy raised her concern that the income would not be obtainable as this year's camps are due to start at any time. T. Cutsumpas felt that the income would be realized when a day camp contracted with us next June and paid at that time for their rental for next summer. The other items under anticipated income including out building rentals and city grant will be remaining the same. The total anticipated income is \$426,000.00.

**A motion was made by R. McGarrigal to approve the anticipated income at \$426,000.00. D. Manacek seconded. The motion passed unanimously.**

Under anticipated income, R. McGarrigal also felt that the Authority should undertake a fundraiser and that they should make a goal of raising \$5,000. Discussion followed.

**A motion was made by R. McGarrigal to add an additional \$5,000 to anticipated income, bringing it up to \$431,000.00. D. Manacek seconded. The motion passed unanimously.**

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1. **2009-2010 Budget - continued:** The next item under discussion, was employee salary & benefits. The hours per week for the staff show a reduction from 40 hours to 37 ½ hours. This is to reflect that the staff lunch period is no longer a paid lunch. Discussion followed. R. McGarrigal stated that in some companies he has worked for that lunch time is paid. T. Cutsumpas disagreed and stated that many businesses including the City do not do a paid lunch and he felt strongly that the Authority should comply with what the City does. Much discussion followed and several options were brought up. It was noted that with the current Authority regulation is that the office does not close during lunch. This regulation needs to be looked at because if only one staff member is present, they are unable to close and therefore they do not get the ½ hour uninterrupted lunch period that state law mandates. The Authority needs to address this issue.

**A motion was made by R. McGarrigal to increase the workday to 8 ½ hours, this would mean a full 40 hour week for the staff with a ½ hour unpaid lunch. J. Preston seconded.**

Discussion followed. The motion was tabled until all employee issues were addressed.

Almost \$13,000 in health care benefits was cut from the original budget. The committee felt that with the current economic situation the employees should take on more of the cost of their health benefits. Under the proposed budget the staff would take on apx. 20% of their own benefits if they wanted to stay with their current plan, unless they would like to go with an HSA Plan, in which case, the Authority would cover 100% of the costs the first year and then over the next few years the employee would take over more of the cost. M. Repole suggested in her letter that the staff be asked to assume 15% of the costs. Much discussion followed. It was recommended that \$6,553.64 be added back to the proposed health insurance line item bring the total up to \$60,500. This amount would be the maximum the Authority would contribute, with the employees picking up the difference, apx. 10% if they wish to stay on their current plan. This item will be voted on once all employee issues were addressed.

Moving on to Mansion operating expenses, R. McGarrigal asked if we could realize a savings using a VoIP phone system. S. Moy did explain that two land lines are needed for the alarm system, but the staff could look further into the VoIP system. Staff did investigate to see if a savings of any kind could be realized with AT & T. AT & T did recommend that we go with the state contracted plan since we are classified as a municipality. We would realize a savings of \$576 savings for the three buildings (Mansion, Red Barn & Greenhouse) in the coming fiscal year. R. McGarrigal felt that there was savings to be made using a VoIP system for the long distance. Staff will look into purchasing the needed hardware to try the VoIP system. With the AT & T savings and possible savings with the VoIP, the Mansion operating expense, communication services line item was reduced from \$3,000 to \$2,000.

Under security systems, S. Moy was able to negotiate a 5% decrease in the rates, saving \$203.94. D. Manacek asked that the staff go back to the Alarm Company and ask for a further discount from them. The current savings was taken from the budget line item and S. Moy will try to re-negotiate a lower rate..

In regards to Children's Garden maintenance and mowing and the Mansion area maintenance and mowing the Authority at last's nights meeting asked if the staff could take over any of these items to reduce the costs. Already taken out of the budget is the Farmhouse mowing and fall clean up which the staff will take over. The staff met and recommends the following: in the Children's Garden the current procedure is that the vendor comes in twice a month to work on the gardens. The staff recommends one of two options. One that we take over the area completely at a savings of \$6,300. The other option is that the vendor come in once a month and concentrates on plant maintenance and the Tarrywile staff will take over weeding, any necessary raking and edging of beds. The savings on this option is \$3,150. Discussion followed and the Board felt the second option was a better way to handle the area. The staff agreed feeling that the vendor could use his expertise with the plants and we could handle the day to day items such as weeding. It was also noted that if we went with option one, it would cost more in the long run to keep the beds at an acceptable appearance because staff lacks the knowledge in regards to plant care.

## 1. 2009-2010 Budget - continued:

In regards to the Mansion area gardens staff recommends that the vendor come in once a month and concentrates on plant maintenance and the Tarrywile staff will take over weeding, any necessary raking and edging of beds. The savings on this is \$3,010. The Board was in agreement with the staff. Total garden maintenance savings for all areas is \$6,160.

In regards to the mowing of the lawn areas, the staff made the following recommendations if they were able to purchase the needed equipment. Staff would take over the mowing of the Children's Garden lawn areas, the outside wall area, the tennis court lawn area, the Apple Orchard and the steep bank next to Jennings House in addition as was previously reported, the staff has already agreed to mow the Farm House area.. The vendor would continue to do the lawn area to the right of the driveway, the lower Mansion tent site and the area of lawn between the lower parking lot and the Mansion and the area of lawn across the front of the Mansion. Staff felt that this area is very time intensive with a lot of weed whacking and it would be better suited to the equipment and number of men that the vendor has. Staff was unable to confirm a new price with the vendor. However with us taking over the mowing in the Children's Garden we would save \$1,493.76. Staff estimates that apx. ½ of the cost of the Mansion area mowing can be realized at a cost of \$4,854.72, for a total mowing savings of \$6,348.48.

D. Manacek asked what the cost of the necessary equipment was. S. Moy reported that for a 60 inch deck mower, a weed whacker, a back pack blower and a hedge trimmer, the total cost would be \$10,297.00. The Authority agreed with the purchase of these items out of the surplus funds from this current fiscal year. S. Moy did note that the staff would be looking to get as much volunteer work as possible to help maintain the Park in the coming year as they undertake and increase their time in tending the Mansion and Children's Garden areas. They did recommend that the field between the Nolan & Jennings property be allowed to go back to a hay field. They would continue to mow an inner path around the wetland area and an outer path along the perimeter, but the middle could be mowed when the other hay fields are mowed or at the end of the season, it could be brush hogged. The Board was in agreement. Staff also wanted the Board to know that they would be doing their best with the added responsibilities and if for some reason they could not handle it, they would come back to the Board.

S. Moy reported that she contacted the auditors and asked if a price break was possible. The Auditor will hold last years price for a savings of \$200 off the proposed line item.

S. Moy reported in regards to the Red Barn, Chairman Marcus had asked if a cost savings could be realized with shutting the building down in the winter. The current yearly cost for propane is \$1,200. The quote we received from Otto to close the system down for the winter was \$1,900. Therefore, there was no cost savings. However S. Moy is in contact with former Authority member M. Lombardi to see if he has other ideas we could pursue.

The portable toilets were taken down to a \$0 line item. T. Cutsumpas stated that the town parks do not provide them and he didn't feel we should. M. Repole disagreed and felt it was a public health issue and wanted the line item put back in and stated so again in her letter. Discussion followed and the Board agreed (with T. Cutsumpas objecting) to leave one portable toilet in. So \$840 was added back into this line item. S. Moy will also be contacting the school system to let them know that the portable toilet will be removed from the end of the Greenhouse. If they wish for it to remain for use by students, they would need to pick up the cost of \$840 for the one portable.

1. **2009-2010 Budget - continued:**

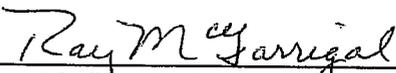
The issue of salary increases was discussed. D. Manacek felt that with the great job the staff is doing and the amount of work that they will be under taking in the coming year that a raise was appropriate. T. Cutsumpas felt that with the current financial situation that it was not, he also stated that he would not be able to support the budget if a raise was put in. Much discussion followed. With the savings realized from the staff taking over mowing and garden maintenance responsibilities for vendors, D. Manacek proposed that like City employees our staff be granted a 3% raise, with 1 ½ % at the beginning of the fiscal year and 1 ½ % additional in 6 month. All other employee items, discussed previously stand as discussed.

**A motion was made by R. McGarrigal to approve the budget and adopt all changes as were discussed.  
B. Talarico seconded. Motion passed unanimously.**

**Adjournment**

A motion was made by R. McGarrigal to adjourn the meeting at 10:53 p.m. Seconded by B. Talarico. Motion passed unanimously.

**Respectfully Submitted,**

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Ray McGarrigal, Acting Secretary