

TOWN FATHERS FORUM
114th Session
Monday, February 28, 1977

Present: Chairman William F. Toomey, John C. Powers, and Ira M. Potell

At 8:00 p.m., Chairman Toomey convened the 114th session of the Town Fathers Forum, and he made the following announcements:

- An anonymous donation in the amount of \$7,503.96 was made to the Town for use in Heritage Park, and was gratefully received by the Town.

- A Special Town Meeting will be held in advance of the Annual Town Meeting at 7:30 p.m. on April 14.

- The Board reluctantly accepted the resignations of William Cossart from the Board of Health and Freda and James Doyle from the Talent Search Committee, all of whom have significantly contributed to the Town.

- The Board has attended the State House hearing on binding arbitration and has requested that the area representatives and senator vote against the continuation of the binding arbitration section of the collective bargaining law.

- As reported by Senator Brooke, the Town has very little chance of receiving substantial, if any, 1977 Department of Housing and Urban Development discretionary funds for which the Board has made application for the purpose of housing rehabilitation and land acquisition for low and moderate income housing.

- Today was WBZ-TV4 "Sudbury Day", and the Town is proud to have been chosen as the first community in this series of programming. Scenes of the Town were shown as well as a public service message concerning Sudbury's efforts to get out of the MBTA.

- The Annual Town Meeting Warrant Review is scheduled for Wednesday, March 30.

SELECTMAN POWERS

Selectman Powers stated that he would like to bring to the attention of those present tonight several items included in the Governor's budget:

- The level of Chapter 70 funding (major school reimbursement) will drop below 50% of the entitlement--\$374,000 less, or a 32% decline.

- The Chapter 766 program which costs \$200,000,000, of which the cities and towns are to absorb 25%.

- A 29.4% decrease in aid-to-school budget.

- \$1,500,000 for school lunch program for which 50% of the cost will go to the cities and towns.

Selectman Powers reported that the January 24 Town Fathers Forum presentation which included an estimated tax rate increase of \$6 - \$10 will be far too low if the Governor's budget passes. Selectman Powers stated that we are presently in a fiscal crisis of major proportions and that also still to be considered is pension funding in the amount of \$290,000,000.

SELECTMAN POTELL

Selectman Potell concurred with Selectman Powers in his great concern for the present fiscal crisis.

Selectman Potell stated that he was pleased to see one bill in the legislative package which would relieve the elderly of some of their tax burdens by giving them major abatements in their property taxes or by reducing a portion of their initial tax.

REPRESENTATIVE GANNETT - PRECINCTS 2, 3, and 4

Representative Gannett reported that she was also in agreement with the dismal fiscal picture, and she commented that, with regard to the elderly, those living in communities slow to revalue to 100% have not been as hard hit.

Representative Gannett stated that, in her opinion, some money could come out of the Governor's budget, but that she was strongly leary of eroding the tax base in a community.

Representative Gannett stated that a request for additional court clerks had been passed today, which, in her opinion, were unnecessary.

Representative Gannett reported that there are 8,000 bills before the Legislature and that she is on two committees.

In response to Chairman Toomey's question as to how Sudbury could get out of the MBTA, Representative Gannett reported that she had tonight received the Board's message concerning joining a bill for this purpose. Representative Gannett reported that, in her opinion, it was doubtful that the Nickinello bill would pass and that the Board would probably have to file a separate bill.

Chairman Toomey stated that the Board would keep trying.

Representative Gannett suggested that a resolution to the effect be passed by the Annual Town Meeting and that pressure be put on the Ways and Means Committee.

On another subject, Representative Gannett reported that she had communicated with Forrest Bradshaw who has been indexing all the Annals of four towns and that it was hoped, as the indexing is a form of a guide, that funding might be received for publishing 500 copies of the same.

TOWN TREASURER WILLIAM E. DOWNING

Mr. Downing stated that, in his opinion, the Selectman and the citizens of the Town would be happy to learn that, for the first time in his memory, the interest rates on the Town's borrowing in anticipation of taxes of \$1,000,000 in notes due May 20, 1977 were 1.79%, 1.91%, 2.0%, and 2.03%.

RICHARD DAVISON - LINCOLN-SUDBURY REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Mr. Davison commented on the valuable pamphlet entitled Sudbury's Fiscal Plight, a report compiled from information presented at the January 24, 1977 Town Fathers Forum by the Town Accountant and which had been made available to those attending tonight's Forum, and he asked how this pamphlet could be given wide distribution.

Mr. Sherman suggested that a copy of the pamphlet be mailed with the Town Warrant.

Selectman Toomey reported that the Board planned to update the report following the Cherry Sheet Conference held on March 16.

MARY D'ANDREA -- SUDBURY SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Mrs. D'Andrea reported that the Sudbury School Committee has, to this time, been able to avoid the school breakfast program and has been working on alternate configurations for special needs children, that the Committee had gone through the process of whether the Noyes School should be K-2 plus special needs children, but found that this plan would take a great deal of costly work.

Mrs. D'Andrea stated that, in the long run, the Committee would stay with its same configuration, but gradually phase the fourth grade into the Noyes School, using that space for special needs, but would also explore a special type of school.

Mrs. D'Andrea reported that the collective bargaining negotiations were still in progress and that the School Committee is very happy with the new Town Counsel, who has responded with great wisdom and speed to their requests.

POLICE CHIEF NICHOLAS LOMBARDI

Police Chief Lombardi reported that he has recently been involved in the regional radio contract, that his department has received five two-way mobile units, four portable radios, and the base station--about \$13,000 worth of communication equipment for about \$400.

Chief Lombardi reported that January had been a quiet month with the exception of an unusually large number of accidents.

HIGHWAY SUPERINTENDENT ROBERT A. NOYES

Mr. Noyes reported that the Highway Department had run out of money for overtime, but had been able to transfer within its own budget.

Chairman Toomey thanked Mr. Noyes, on behalf of the Board, for the Highway Department's outstanding job during the severe winter.

Mr. Noyes reported that he had picked up a little more than \$20,000 worth of federal equipment.

In response to a question concerning the Peakham Road/Old Lancaster Road intersection, the Board reported that it had reviewed a corrective plan proposed by Town Engineer James V. Merloni, but had deferred further consideration of the same until after the Annual Town Meeting.

In response to Selectman Powers' question, Mr. Noyes confirmed that the widening of a portion of Route 20 has been deferred until August of 1978.

MRS. KATHERINE ABRAMS - LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS

Mrs. Abrams reported that the League of Women Voters was holding its Annual Candidates Night on March 15 at the Curtis Jr. High and its Annual Warrant Review on March 22 at the Town Hall.

TOWN COUNSEL PAUL L. KENNY

Town Counsel Paul L. Kenny reported that he was becoming increasingly involved with Town boards and committees.

At 9:00 p.m., Chairman Toomey adjourned the Forum for coffee and informal conversation.