

**160.**

A Special Meeting of the City Council was held at the Arnone School, 135 Belmont St., auditorium, due to the elevator not working. Council President Eaniri presiding. The meeting was called to order at 6:05 pm with eleven members present.

In City Council, December 3, 2018

The Council President asks for a moment of silence for George W. Bush, our 41<sup>st</sup> President, who passed away.

The Council President asks for a moment of silence for Michael O'Donnell, who is Assessor John O'Donnell's brother. He passed this week. Our thoughts are with his family.

**SPECIAL MEETING**

**584** Call of the meeting

Accepted and placed on file.

**585** Officer's return of notice

Accepted and placed on file.

**HEARING**

**586** Ordered: That the City Council hereby determines the percentages of the local tax levy in accordance with the provisions of M.G.L., Ch. 40, Section 56, to be borne by each class of real property, as defined in Section 2A of Chapter 59, and personal property.

The Public Hearing was opened by the Council President. He stated that the purpose of this hearing is to set the tax rate, rules set by the Department of Revenue.

Diane Rangel of Galen St. appeared. She asked that the council give the residents a break on the taxes. She showed a display of her neighborhood marking the businesses, abandoned buildings and buildings that are tax exempt. She believes the homeowners are picking up the slack of the businesses that do not pay taxes and the abandoned buildings.

Elaine Donovan of 42 Thatcher Sq. appeared. She stated that the retail marijuana businesses would raise thousands of dollars for the city.

The owner of Liberty Printing Company of 99 Lawrence St. appeared. She stated that many businesses have closed in the city since she has been here. The company has been in business since 1901. She states that we should have pride in the city. More businesses should be encouraged to come and the Mayor should work towards that.

Jim Leonard of 72 Clement Ave. appeared. He stated that we are giving businesses tax abatements and that is why residential taxes are high.

Chris Cooney member of the Metro South Chamber of Commerce for 21 years appeared. He stated that businesses pay a much higher tax than residential. Hospitals provide jobs for residents and provide essential services. He wants to attract new businesses. They come, but they don't stay.

Councillor Cruise stepped in at 6:25pm

Chris Cooney stated that he offered to hire someone to facilitate a plan to attract big business to the city. He asks that the rate stay at 1.73, the same as the previous year.

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**HEARING (cont'd)**

Gregory Belcher owner of Waitt Funeral home appeared. He agrees with Mr. Cooney. Since 1926, his business has been built up. He asks that the rate stay at 1.73, He also owns residential property on Brockton. He stated that the city is losing good people due to the tax rate on businesses.

Dennis Hersey St. of 7 Connell St. appeared. He believes that pay raises, pensions and contracts to city workers have hurt the city's budget. The Mayor should stop creating job positions. He suggests giving union workers that live here a percentage raise. He stated that the Mayor stated that the crime rate is going down and that because of Provo, new businesses are coming in. Also, Marijuana shops are supposed to bring in \$8 million dollars a year. He believes that Police Department needs more funds and 4 fire trucks are in disrepair. More money should go to Public Safety issues.

London Hall of 95 Tremont St appeared. He is a businessman in Brockton. He questioned why we owe \$10 million for the schools. He asked if that is why we are raising taxes.

Elaine Donovan commented regarding retail marijuana. She states that there is a large area around Brockton that does not have retail marijuana and we may miss the opportunity the longer we take to make rules and ordinances.

Hearing Held.

The Council President states that the CFO Jay Condon and Chris Pike, Assessor are here to answer questions. He also states that the City Council do not negotiate the contracts. The Mayor does.

Councillor Derenoncourt stepped down.

Councillor Sullivan informs everyone that the 2 and a half percent is already in the budget.

Council President Eaniri stated that when the Mayor was elected, he stated that he wouldn't do this but he needed to. He stated that property values are up. That is why residential rate will go up. If someone offered you more for your home, you would accept it.

Councillor Derenoncourt stepped back in.

Chris Pike of the Assessor's Office stated that the assessment is 100% of the market value. Assessors have to assess all property in the city. He stated that rising budgets cause rising taxes. If budget decreased, then taxes would also decrease. He stated that the rate for last year was 1.73. He stated that the residential taxes for Brockton residents is the lowest in the surrounding towns for similar priced homes.

Councillor Farwell stated that after reading the packet given by the Assessor's Office, he was surprised at the amount of exempt property. Some of the properties are state or city owned, Brockton Hospital, school property, churches they are exempt. He worries that residents only have 2 payments to make up the increase in taxes. He states that the valuation is supposed to be the fair market value of the property. Many sale of property are higher than the assessments. He states that there is really no room to move on the tax rate. The sad fact is that people are close to being unable to pay.

Coucillor Sullivan thanked Mr. Pike and the Assessors Office for preparing the booklet and it was very detailed. He states that this is the worst part of the job. When the budget is approved it is already in it. They can't really go up on taxes.

Councillor Rodrigues stated that last year he asked Mr. O'Donnell for tax bills from surrounding towns. He wanted to see the dollar amount. He wants to see the tax rate. Resident are paying more in taxes than it seems. If we stay at 1.73, businesses will get a

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**HEARING (cont'd)**

credit and residents will have an increase of approximately \$285.00. If we bring it down by 1%, businesses will still get a decrease, but residents will only have a small increase.

Mr. Pike stated that is due to residential property values being higher than the commercial properties this year.

Councillor Lally stepped down.

A recess was called for the Special City Council meeting hearing. Recessed at 7:04pm

Back in session at 7:15pm

Councillor Sullivan asked the CFO to speak.

Mr. Condon stated that the money is already spent. They approved the budget already. He stated that they can be more stringent in collective bargaining in the future. The thing that is killing us is that there isn't a lot of new businesses. Commercial properties are flat. Residential properties are going up a lot. Boston is unaffordable for many people, so they rent in Brockton, where the rents are more reasonable and it is a city with many services. A tax increase is hard. The bill comes in in 2 parts. There isn't much we can do except get new commercial businesses in to the city. The city is fully built. Not much property that isn't developed. We have a split rate. Other towns do not, because they have more property to build on and they have much more commercial growth than Brockton. We need more commercial growth in Brockton. His recommendation is that there is no room to move. We can only move down 2%, but that would leave no leeway if an emergency arises.

Councillor Cruise states that by helping businesses, we are helping citizens. The more businesses we have, the less taxes the home owner has to pay. If businesses leave, we will pay more in taxes. He is concerned about big businesses affecting the small businesses. They won't be able to afford the taxes if they are barely making it. We can't afford to go higher.

Councillor Beauregard states that she doesn't want to penalize businesses or unions. Other towns don't have 3 hospitals or as many schools as Brockton. There are tax abatements and exemptions if they cannot afford the taxes. She asks Mr. Pike to speak regarding tax breaks.

Mr. Pike states that they take applications in his office for exemptions.

Councillor Cruise motions to set the factor at 1.73 and was properly seconded by Councillor Lally. The motion carried by a hand vote with Councillor Rodrigues voting in the negative.

A two minute recess was called.

Adopted by a roll call vote taken by "yeas" and "nays"; eleven members present with ten voting in the affirmative. Councillor Rodrigues voting in the negative. Councillor Cruise motioned to file for reconsideration with the wish that it not prevail and was properly seconded. Reconsideration failed by a hand vote.

Adjourned 7:43pm

