

# Meeting of the Municipal Council

of 18 December 2023 | Convocation and announcement of 12 December 2023

## Present

### Mayor

ZOVILE-BRAQUET Marion (CSV)

### Aldermen

ANSAY Stéphanie (LSAP),  
SCHMITZ Jean-Pierre (CSV)

### Councillors

DI GENOVA Jean-Pierre (CSV), LOOSE Yves (CSV),  
ENTRINGER Marc (CSV),  
ZHU Dali (DP), AXMANN Robert (DP),

ARRENSDORFF Jean-Jacques (Déi Gréng),  
THOMÉ Pol (LSAP)

### Municipal Secretary, f. f.

TAZIAUX Tim

### Editor

GASPAR Alix

### Excused

EIFES Eric (DP)

#### 1. Personnel matters

MZB rules all items relating to personnel matters to be dealt in closed session.

#### 2. Approval of a provisional sale agreement

The agreement to sell a plot of land registered under cadastral number 1598/5126 located in Moutfort “am Todenweg” is approved.

Vote in favour: MZB, JPS, SA, JJA, RA, JPDG, ME, YL, PT, DZ

#### 3. Approval of a sale agreement

The agreement for the free of charge transfer of the land registered under cadastral number 1974/5768 located in Impasse de la Syre in Moutfort is approved.

Vote in favour: MZB, JPS, SA, JJA, RA, JPDG, ME, YL, PT, DZ

#### 4. Approval of a firewood tax regulation

The Municipal Council decides to increase the price of firewood in accordance with the advice of Gil Jacquemoth, Forestry Officer. From now on, delivery will only be billed once and orders will be limited to 6 cords per household.

Vote in favour: MZB, JPS, SA, JJA, RA, JPDG, ME, YL, PT, DZ

#### 5. Appointment of members to advisory boards

The Municipal Council appoints additional members to the advisory committees and working groups. Applications for the remaining positions will be published shortly.

Vote in favour: MZB, JPS, SA, JJA, RA, JPDG, ME, YL, PT, DZ

#### 6. Approval of amendments to the traffic regulations

The Municipal Council unanimously approves amendments to traffic regulations. In order to implement all the necessary measures to ensure public safety, the by-law was adjusted in several places.

Vote in favour: MZB, JPS, SA, JJA, RA, JPDG, ME, YL, PT, DZ

#### 7. Approval of income

The Municipal Council unanimously decides to approve the income presented, amounting to €17,179.67.

Vote in favour: MZB, JPS, SA, JJA, RA, JPDG, ME, YL, PT, DZ

#### 8. Approval of the budget for the year 2024

MZB gives the floor to the alderman in charge of finances, JPS. He announces that a recently received state subsidy confirmation reduces the municipal debt by approximately one million. JPS wishes to thank the municipal staff for their commitment to budget preparation, as well as the Finance Commission for their clearly articulated statement.

DZ takes the floor. The DP faction finds the ordinary surplus for 2024 to be low and the municipal expenses quite high. They criticize that the water price should have been increased earlier, as clearly evident in the multi-year financial plan. Regarding extraordinary expenses, despite the municipality's continuous growth and the need for a larger building, the DP prefers expanding the existing building rather than constructing a new Town Hall.

It is questioned whether a study in this direction

has already been commissioned. The same applies to the construction of the new sports hall; the utility of the hall is not questioned, but it is certain that the project, costing approximately €14,000,000, was not the cheapest offer. Furthermore, the budget contains no information regarding a new intervention centre for CGDIS. Overall, the council focuses too much on Contern concerning new projects, and the surrounding villages seem to be overlooked. The DP does not wish to vote in favor of the municipal budget for 2024.

JJA expresses a critical view on behalf of “déi Gréng”. He laments that the recently revised format of the municipal council report focuses on votes and practically no longer reflects discussions. A comprehensive presentation, at least regarding the budget, is hoped for. JPPG is aware that a municipal budget is always subject to debate but does not ignore the work invested, for which he thanks the staff. Given the current economic and geopolitical context, the prospects for the municipal business sector are not very promising.

As already indicated by the consulting firm MC Luxembourg, the municipality's budget faces a structural problem: expenses increase faster than revenues. The General Endowment Fund represents the majority (75%) of the municipality's income, with a lower percentage coming from the Business Tax (30%). All these revenues are allocated by the state, and if a new government decides to reduce them, we must accept it. It is regrettable that the municipality is so dependent on the state. Compensating for its income by increasing the water price is not very sensitive in a time when many citizens are facing financial difficulties. It would be better to analyze personnel costs in more detail: including the salary share of Proactif employees accumulates an expense of about €8,000,000. Therefore, it might be interesting to launch an audit for a systematic examination and evaluation of personnel and their tasks.

As shown in the multi-year financial plan, between €20,000,000 and €24,000,000 will be allocated to mandatory measures, which cannot be reduced, and without them, the municipality would not function. However, there is still a little less than 15% of expenses for sports, culture, the elderly, and other optional «nice-to-have» activities. The consulting firm should have warned that not all major projects can be implemented simultaneously. Overall, JJA wonders if the same firm is allowed to advise and develop projects; isn't there a conflict of interest? “déi Gréng” also criticizes the fact that Contern is at the center of the council's future vision, while other villages in the municipality seem neglected. Finally, JJA emphasizes that we have no choice but

to pursue sustainability. Biodiversity and climate are extremely important issues that are not sufficiently addressed in the municipal budget. This budget for 2024 is very risky, not very viable, and does not lead to a more equitable society. JJA, therefore, does not wish to support it.

ME presents his vision of the municipal budget: according to him, the budget for 2024 illustrates how the municipality of Contern envisions the future. A vision that focuses on adapting infrastructure and maintaining the quality of life. This vision is now being implemented through a targeted investment strategy. There is enough financial flexibility to undertake major projects, including the new sports hall, the expansion of the school campus and the Maison Relais, as well as the renovation of the Conter Stuff, which is a crucial project to preserve the character of the village and the center of Contern. When the center of the village of Contern is completed in spring 2024, the infrastructure will be ready to offer a good quality of life throughout the next decade. This improvement in the quality of life continues through Milbech, Moutfort, Oetringen, Medingen, and Kroentgeshof. The CSV's vision is to adapt municipal infrastructure to demographic growth. Their guiding principle involves investments of €24,000,000 and a loan of €18,000,000, even though cash management may still pose uncertainties (subsidy payments, investments by municipal unions). Budget flexibility must be optimized through different financing models, in the service of the public and especially to avoid indebting future generations. Whether it's debt per capita or the percentage of debt annuities, the established criteria are good, and there is room for other projects.

The main plan, summarized in the multi-year financial plan, foresees investments amounting to €66,000,000 between 2024 and 2028. The mayor, the alderman in charge of finances, and the coalition unite to implement their vision of the future of the Municipality of Contern.

The Finance Commission has given a positive opinion on the budget, a cautious budget that must be executed reasonably and with the utmost care in fund management. The stable surplus of the ordinary budget guarantees a stable financial situation for the future.

EM adds one last detail, emphasizing that everyone is motivated to implement the action plan in a concrete and dynamic manner. Unfortunately, technical constraints or even ideological perspectives constantly arise, preventing faster progress. The CSV is ready to implement what has been planned over the past 6 years. They want citizens to be proud of their municipality and community. This budget is the right

way to make that possible.

MZB responds to individual speeches. She describes the budget for 2024 as innovative and is delighted to finally implement major projects. The municipality must be prepared for the future. The goals set for housing construction, school expansion, Maison Relais, and daycare enlargement are essential to address the constant increase in the number of citizens. An increase in personnel and an enlargement of the Town Hall are necessary. Significant investments are made in safety and traffic moderation, clearly improving the quality of life in all villages of the municipality. Furthermore, all villages are redesigned and renovated, one by one, in close collaboration and consultation with the residents. Nature and the environment are at the heart of the council's priorities. A photovoltaic installation is, for example, planned for the "um Ewent" campus. Finally, the Mayor thanks all those who participated in the development and drafting of the budget for the year 2024.

The budget for the year 2024 has been approved with 7 votes in favour and 3 votes against.

Vote in favour: MZB, JPS, SA, JPDG, ME, YL, PT

Vote against: DZ, RA, JJA

#### 9. Information and Questions by municipal councillors

PT attended a meeting of the SICEC committee on December 1, 2023. It outlines the expansion of the crematorium, which will receive an extension by 2025 housing new facilities for staff as well as additional ceremony rooms. Additionally, personnel changes were announced: staffing will be increased to operate in two shifts. To support these developments, the contributions from member municipalities will be increased from €400 to €500, and those from non-members from €600 to €700.

JJA appreciates the bags distributed by Saint Nicholas.

To conclude, MZB wishes everyone present joyful holidays and wonderful moments with family and loved ones.