

**Board of Finance  
Town of East Windsor  
11 Rye Street  
East Windsor, CT**

**MINUTES OF PUBLIC HEARING, Monday, April 26, 2010 at 7:30 p.m.**

These minutes are not official until approved at a subsequent meeting.

Members Present: Jack Mannette, Danelle E. Godeck, Robert Little, Kathleen Pippin, Jason Bowsza, and Marie DeSousa  
Members Absent: None  
Alternates Present: Jamie Daniel and Thomas Baker  
Alternate Absent: None  
Others: Denise Menard, John L. Burnham, Richard P. Pippin, Jr., Mark Simmons, Gilbert Hayes, Catherine Cabral, Timothy Howes, Dale Nelson, and hundreds of townspeople  
Press: K. Loucks (Journal Inquirer)

Chairman Jack Mannette called the Public Hearing to Order at 7:30 p.m., in the East Windsor Middle School Auditorium, 30 Main Street, Broad Brook, Connecticut.

Flyers were given to the audience upon entering the middle school. The flyers entitled "East Windsor 2010-2011 Budget Information". The flyers were not authored by the Board of Finance, but by a group called Better East Windsor. The flyer gave basic information regarding the proposed budget, Charter mandates, surrounding towns' mill rates, and history of budget proposals for the Town of East Windsor.

Chairman Jack Mannette introduced himself as Chairman of the Board of Finance. He indicated this public hearing is a continuation of the public hearing which was on March 24, 2010. On March 17, 2010, the Board of Selectman and the Board of Education presented their respective budgets to the Board of Finance. Certain items were omitted to those budgets, not deliberately, but had to be addressed at the six Budget Workshop Special Meetings of the Board of Finance which took place March 26, 2010 through April 14, 2010. The proposed budget presented on March 17, 2010 was in the amount of \$33,467,044 or an increase of 5.03%. The mill rate would be increased at 3.14 mills and the tax increase would be approximately 14.45%. After the Budget Workshop Special meetings, the Board of Finance increased the proposed budget approximately \$266,000 to \$33,733,853 or an increase of 5.43%. The mill rate would be increased at 3.852 mills and the tax increase would be 16.17%. Mr. Mannette indicated this is not an adopted budget by the Board of Finance, but a proposed budget which is being presented to the public for their input pursuant to the new Charter.

Mr. Mannette gave a brief overview to the public regarding the slide presentation of the proposed budget, including charts which will show the tax increases and spending over the last ten years. Mr. Mannette asked any person who wishes to speak to the Board of Finance regarding the budget issues, can do so later in the meeting. He asked if they would keep their comments brief and not to exceed three minutes. He also asked if they could sign their names and give their addresses on a legal pad which was placed on a table in front of the microphone. Questions and comments from the public and Board Members will be entertained and an open dialog among all will be held. Other Town Officials were present at the hearing and would also be available to answer any questions which may arise in regards to their respective departments.

Mr. Mannette started to explain to the audience the purpose of the public hearing is in accordance with the revised Town Charter which was approved in November, 2009. The Charter directs the Board of Finance before a budget can be approved, a referendum must be held for the public to approve same. If the budget does not pass on the first referendum, the Charter indicates a total of three referendums can be held. The referendums have been scheduled for May 11, 2010, May 25, 2010, and June 8, 2010. The biggest change in the Charter indicates if the budget is not approved after the third referendum, the budget automatically increases 2% over the current fiscal year budget. If that should happen during this current budget, the budget would increase approximately \$637,000.

Mr. Mannette discussed the current difficult economic times and many things have to be considered during this budget season. One major factor is the revenue shortfall the town is currently experiencing. Between the State of Connecticut decreasing funding to municipalities, and the decrease in the collection of taxes, the Town of East Windsor is experiencing a revenue shortfall of approximately \$546,000. Tax collection is only at 97% to 98% not 100%. When a shortfall occurs, the town has no other alternative than to raid the general fund to pay for expenditures. A new tax collector has been doing an excellent job trying to collect delinquent taxes; however, it has been decided to project tax collection at a rate of 99.5% rather than 100%. Due to this decision, an additional \$135,000 has to be added to the proposed budget.

By use of a slide presentation, Mr. Mannette began discussing the first slide was entitled "Five Year Analysis Assets – Liabilities and Undesignated Fund". Using figures from the June 30, 2009 audit, he indicated the assets and cash balance are on the decline. The liabilities are up approximately 15%. He described the undesignated fund. He indicated the general accounting rules, the undesignated fund should represented 5% of total expenditures. If that goes below 5%, it would put the Town of East Windsor in jeopardy. He began discussing the chart which showed a five year (2005-2009) analysis of Assets, Liabilities and Undesignated Fund Balance. He indicated a healthy reserve in 2007 at 15.8%; however, by 2009 the reserve is down to 5.8% or approximately \$1.85 Million. A concern if the undesignated fund falls below the 5%, the town could possibly lose it's bond rating.

Mr. Mannette began discussing mandatory expenses. He briefly explained new accounting procedures called Gaspe 45. He also discussed the employee contractual obligations, such as supporting health insurance coverage for retired employees. These monies were being taken from the general fund, however, due to the new accounting procedures, a new line must be added to the budget accounting for post-employment benefits. This increase was approximately \$108,000. An additional item to the budget, was accrued wages or the 27<sup>th</sup> payroll. This is an item which will change year to year due to the calendar. This payroll is the last payroll of the fiscal year. Previously this was not budgeted, however, it has been determined it should be budgeted to protect the general fund balance. The 27<sup>th</sup> payroll projected is approximately \$225,000. Overall expenses have been fixed, other than utilities, health insurance premiums and waste collection. Another expense which is on the rise is the coverage of heart and hypertension claims for the police department. The town is liable to cover the disability which has increased over \$23,000.

Mr. Mannette discussed the option the town has to control expenses. He indicated the contractual obligations of the unions have a significant impact on the budget. He showed a group of slides entitled “Six Year Town Government Budget Growth Salaries and Benefits and Other Expenses with 2010/2011 Requested Budget”, “Six Year Board of Education Budget Growth Salaries and Benefits and Other Expenses with 2010/2011 Requested Budget”, and “Eleven Year Town Budget Growth Salaries and Benefits and Other Expenses”. Most departments have absorbed most of the expenses, however, salaries and benefits are approximately \$1.72 Million, and of that Board of Education is approximately \$1.5 Million. He talked about the increases in capital improvement of approximately \$330,000. Other slides were used to show the public a ten year history of budgets and increases. Salaries and benefits have been increasing approximately 7.2% per year and expenses have been increasing approximately 2.3% per year. The proposed budget salary and benefits are increased at 7.77% and other expenses at 2.01%. However, the Board of Education salaries and benefits are up approximately 11% and other expenses are decreased by 5.5%.

Mr. Mannette indicated that back in December, the Board of Selectmen and Board of Education met to discuss preliminary budget proposals. A letter went to all departments recommending that all budget proposals for 2010/2011, if possible, be at a zero increase over the 2009/2010 budgets. He explained if a zero increase was proposed, there would still be a tax increase of 8% due to the finances of the Town of East Windsor. If the proposed budget which is being presented this evening is passed, it will be a tax increase of 16.17% and if the default 2% budget is passed, it would still be a tax increase of 10.8%. Due to these figures, the Board of Finance is requesting the assistance of the public to determine what action should be made. He showed another slide indicating the property tax analysis of the proposed budget of 5.87% increase and default budget of 2% increase. He discussed this slide and the figures.

The presentation ended and Mr. Mannette instructed the public input part of the meeting was about to begin. He will call each person who has signed the sheet indicating they

would like to speak. There were approximately 36 names on the list. He reiterated to keeping their comments less than three minutes.

Eric Moffet, 58 Scantic Road addressed the hearing. He is the Chairman of the East Windsor Economic Development Commission. He indicated 40% of the taxes paid in the Town come from businesses. Very few towns have that type of revenue from businesses. He supports the proposed budget because he feels that it would attract businesses to the town. If taxes are kept low, he fears it would hinder on the economic development of the town and it is the best interest of the town to support businesses and support the proposed budget. He encouraged all to vote yes for the budget on May 11, 2010.

Rick Covill, 4 Management Drive addressed the hearing. He is the Co-Chairman of the East Windsor Economic Development Commission. He reiterated what Mr. Moffet previously stated, indicating businesses in town pay 40% of the taxes and the town must support businesses. The passing of the proposed budget will move the town forward. The town must support the improvement of the town's infrastructure. He also encouraged all to vote yes for the proposed budget on May 11, 2010.

Brenda Crockett, 10 Rockville Road addressed the hearing. She indicated the bottom line of this hearing is two scenarios: pay a higher monthly tax or loose property values. She has lived in this town for ten years, and she feels that every year the town experiences the same problem come budget time; battle of the wills. She thinks the town needs to compromise and come together during these trying times. She is a mother of four children and she is currently struggling; however, she supports the proposed budget of an increase of 5.87%. She believes it will move the town forward. She hopes that the public will support the budget and vote yes on May 11, 2010.

Craig Wentworth, 1E Town House Road addressed the hearing. He said he was curious as to the people at the hearing who work for the State or Town and who are getting a 14% raise this year. He indicated tomorrow was tax freedom day, which is a date that an average American starts working for himself and not government taxes. He indicated if this proposed budget passes, he'll be working until October before he has paid all of his taxes. He said people are laid off and hurting financially. He believes the Boards can find a way to cut this budget. He is wondering if the Town of East Windsor can share costs with others. He indicated the State wants to increase taxes, the Federal Government will be increasing taxes for health care and now the Town wants more taxes too. He cannot support this proposal and encourages everyone to vote no on May 11, 2010.

Albert Floyd, 40 Whiton Road addressed the hearing. He was there in support of the Warehouse Point Public Library. The library is a safe haven for children to read and experience the love of books. He wants this service to continue. He would like the Board of Finance to continue the funding of the Warehouse Point Public Library. He and his wife are currently unemployed and they support the increases of the proposed budget. They will vote yes on May 11, 2010.

John Balch and Cher Balch of 200 South Main Street had requested in the beginning of the meeting to speak, however, after the presentation of the proposed budget, they chose not to speak and indicated all their questions were answered during the presentation.

Elyse Speilberg, 244 Rye Street addressed the hearing. She is the President of the Warehouse Point Public Library and was delighted to speak after Mr. Floyd. She was at a meeting of the Board of Selectmen recently where it was asked why the Town needs a public library. The library welcomes everyone to enjoy the books and other services it provides. It is a great resource for students in the town along with any life long learners. She gave a historical background of the library and the funding of same. The library had two endowments given to it in 1936 and 1968. Not until 1990 did the library receive funds from the town for operating. The budget request of \$36,500 would be funds to cover the purchase of book and to maintain the hours of operation. A petition was given to the Board of Finance, signed by 150 townspeople asking the Board of Finance to fund the library requested \$46,500 to maintain hours and purchase of new books. She supports the current proposed budget.

Lisa Madson, 36 Barber Hill Road addressed the hearing. She supports the proposed Board of Education and Board of Selectmen budget. She discussed a newspaper article dated April 12, 2010, regarding the sales of homes in East Windsor for the first quarter of the year versus the first quarter of last year. Last year the average home sold for \$261,000 and this year the average home sold for \$167,000. She is very concerned over these figures. She is concerned with the decline home values in the town. She also mentioned current inventory of homes for sale in East Windsor versus surrounding towns. East Windsor had the highest amount of homes for sale. She also mentioned the concerns of home equity given the fact the home values in the town are on the decline. She supports the proposed budget. She wanted the public to think about what Mr. Moffet discussed and attracting new businesses to the town. She also talked about the importance in funding the school budget; concerning East Windsor is 23 out of 23 when it comes to school performance. She endorses the proposed budget and encouraged all to vote yes on May 11, 2010.

Fran Lowell, 37 Graham Road addressed the hearing. She indicated if the budget does not pass, where the cuts will come from. She indicated cutting the salaries and benefits or to cut from the police and fire departments will affect the services of the town. She has a grandson in school and education is very important to the children. She supports the proposed budget and encourages vote yes on May 11, 2010.

Tom Muska, 216 East Road addressed the hearing. He indicated the current budget problems are due to the difficult economy. He has read articles in the newspaper which indicate job growth is not expected until 2015. He feels the town cannot grow higher than the private sector. He doesn't believe the average citizen can go through the proposed budget line by line and the people who are qualified to dissect the budget are the people in the elected offices. Due to binding arbitration, the town is stuck paying their employees raises. In the private sector, there is no guarantee of raises. He indicated

he could support the budget; however, he wouldn't be able to support anything over a 3% increase.

Bill Dove, 109 Melrose Road addressed the hearing. He was a former member of the Board of Finance. He wanted to explain some key issues the Board of Finance is up against. He explained even if there was a zero percent increase, there would still be an 8% tax increase. The reason for this is because the funds were spent last year which the town did not have. From the beginning of the budget process, the town has an 8% increase. Even if the 2% Charter driven budget is approved, a 10% tax increase will be had by the tax payer. He understands the figures are not attractive, but these are the facts. He thought it points would help the public understand easier.

Matt Schmitt, 52 North Main Street addressed the hearing. He indicated he did not advocate the 16% tax increase. He believes it is crazy to have such a high tax increase so raises can be funded. He believes the Boards need to rethink the proposals and a zero percentage increase is the only way to go.

Bill Schultz, 9 Lindsay Lane addressed the hearing. He spoke about the flyer which was given at the door which he believed was written by nonpartisan group. He supports the budget. He believes the town has been lucky for years considering what surrounding towns have been increasing their taxes. Even with the 16% increase, East Windsor will still be paying lower in taxes than South Windsor and Ellington. Services of the police department, fire department, ambulance, education, and library are needed in the town. Talking about teacher's salaries and raises is not going to change those raises and salaries. Those union contracts have to be renegotiated. He supports the budget proposal and will vote yes on May 11, 2010.

Bea Corrado, 1 Lindsay Lane addressed the hearing. She wanted to thank the Board of Finance and all of the Boards in town for all of their hard work in putting together the proposed budget in recognizing the needs of the town. She and her husband chose East Windsor and hope to stay. The community needs to grow and very fortunate of all the services this town provides. She understands the difficult economic times, but feels the budget needs to be supported. She will vote yes. She wanted to comment on a graph which was shown which depicted the Education budget in this town is 59% of the full town budget, wherein other towns it is much higher approximately 65% or higher.

Jerilyn Corso, 23 Lindsay Lane addressed the hearing. She indicated she is in favor of the proposed budget. She is not happy with the figures, but realizes the need the town has. She indicated East Windsor's crime rate is very high and cutting from the police department is not an option. She also indicated the education cannot be cut because it would hurt the children of East Windsor. She understands everyone being upset about the salaries and benefits, but those are contractual obligations. Those contracts are going to be renegotiated in the future. Poor town management in the past 15 years has caused the current economic problems the town is facing. She will vote yes to support the budget.

Bog Lyke, 80 Rye Street addressed the hearing. He indicated he has followed the budget process. He has received many emails, phone calls, and has had many conversations with people in the community regarding the budget. The question he had about the proposed budget if the Board of Finance, the six members and two alternates, are all in agreement with the proposed budget. Mr. Jason Bowsza indicated to Mr. Lyke it is the general consensus of the Board of Finance and would like the input of the public. Mr. Lyke indicated it was his judgment there was infighting among the Board Members. He would like all of the members to work together and not act upon personal opinions or agendas. House re-sale values are a concern. Generally, he is behind the Economic Development Commission in attempts to bring business into the town. However, he would like discussions of cost cutting and furlough days. He would like to talk about the future and the managing process thereof.

Ms. Marie DeSousa asked Mr. Lyke if he had any emails that he could share with the Board for additional input. He indicated he did not have the emails with him this evening.

Fred Stucklen, 148 Winkler Road addressed the hearing. He indicated the difficult economy and effects of the budget, including the contractual obligations and salary and benefit increases. He was wondering if the teacher's union has been asked to do voluntary cut backs, if so, did they refuse. He has been a resident in this town 35 years and raised five children. He believes controlling costs. He believes if the teachers don't want to give back, they should be laid off. There is no other choice; the town only has so much money. He cannot afford to move out of town due to the fallen house values. He does not support the 16% increase, but possibly the 2%.

Eileen Bell of 228 Scantic Road addressed the hearing. She indicated she supported the town budget, the teachers and the Board of Education. She believes teachers work hard and the town should support the children. She supports the increase.

Karen Boutin, 121 Windsorville Road addressed the hearing. She is an owner of a business in East Windsor. She employs approximately seventeen. Her employees have not received a raise in three years and have had to work share for the last eight months due to the poor economic climate. She is not in favor of the 16% tax increase. Families, including her employees, are suffering from financial hardships and she cannot support this proposal.

Cynthia Herms, 12 Pamela Court addressed the hearing. She felt it was important to come to the hearing and voice her opinion. She is a parent of a six year old daughter who attends Board Brook Elementary School. She supports the budget and the Board of Education. She has concerns about a letter she received from the Broad Brook Elementary School indicating the school did not meet the State's standards in the No Child Left Behind. This information frightens her. She believes East Windsor has no other options than to support the proposed budget. The town's services are also in jeopardy if the budget isn't supported. She understands the hard times, however, believes no other choice than to support the budget and the increase.

John Simonelli, 71 Depot Street addressed the hearing. He is a homeowner and he understands that expenses have gone up, in his household, his expenses have risen. He understands that all budgets have to increase starting at the local level all the way up to the federal level. He is concerned about the general fund balance declining while masking the budget and not collecting the real estate taxes. All services in town are in jeopardy if this budget doesn't pass. Most of the increases requested are not unreasonable. He supports the budget.

Brian Turley, 4 Lindsay Lane addressed the hearing. He supports the budget. He indicated the budget requests from the town departments are reasonable. He spoke of the fire department sprinkler system which needs to be replaced and parking lots that has to be repaired. His concerns with cutting of the Board of Education budget would force more and more parents to place their students into magnet schools, which would cost the town even more money. He also mentioned the article which lists East Windsor 23 out of 23 for education. He will support the budget on May 11, 2010.

Terry Willingham, 115R Reservoir Avenue, addressed the hearing. She supports the budget. She understands the three major players in the budget process safety, general government, and education. The town needs all the services provided.

Laura Hanson, 6 Lindsay Lane, addressed the hearing. She echoed a few of the people who previously spoke. She thanked the Board Members along with all Town Officials for all of their hard work and dedication. She felt the budget that is presented is the best one. She is embarrassed by the article which rates East Windsor 23 out of 23. She would like that to get better and they way to do that is to support the budget. She also read a letter from a resident, Jill Turner of 89 Rockville Road, who could not attend the meeting. It read that she has been a resident for five years and has a two year old child. She is in support of education and the school system. She indicated she supports the budget. The letter was given to the Board of Finance.

Kathy Bilodeau, 343 Scantic Road, addressed the hearing. She thanked all of the people who attended the hearing and all who commented. She is a Member of the Board of Education and has been working with the Superintendent for the last two years and they have been unable to cut any area any further. She would agree to concessions but certain teachers are agreeable while others support arbitration. Contract negotiations will be taking place over the summer months. The Board of Education is the largest employer in the town. She supports the budget and will vote yes on May 11, 2010.

Cathy Simonelli, 71 Depot Street, addressed the hearing. She indicated she supported the budget and felt that the town could do better and not go backwards. She felt that capital improvement needs to be funded and begin on that process to attract business to the town. The services of police and fire department need to be funded also. She didn't believe the town could afford to cut anything out of the Board of Education budget due to the fact the high school will be reevaluated this coming year for accreditation status. She supports the budget and will vote yes on May 11, 2010.

Waren Wenz, 118 Thrall Road, addressed the hearing. He had a complaint about the trash and why it was so high. He was told after the trashcans were put into place; the cost of collection would be much lower. He wanted Ms. Menard to clarify this point. He felt that the Board of Education and Board of Selectmen Budget should be two separate entities. He does not support budget, he indicated he was voting no on May 11, 2010.

Ms. Marie DeSousa wanted to Ms. Menard to address the hearing to clarify the question regarding trash collection. Ms. Menard indicated she didn't have the exact numbers with her at the hearing, but she did know the increase represents, however, the large containers did decrease the trash disposal and recycle fees. However, last year there was no hazard waste pick-up. This is done every other year and therefore, this year the additional \$20,000 is for hazardous waste disposal. There was decreased spending in contract eliminating pickup at mobile home parks; however, Board of Selectmen did not believe that was fair and added those pick-ups increasing the cost.

Scot Stanton, 105 South Main Street was called to address the hearing, but was not in attendance and did not speak.

Sam Kanagianny, 17 Thompson Road, addressed the hearing. He was concerned with the effects of the budget on businesses in the town. The businesses pay 40% of the taxes. He used to employ 75 people and now only 20 due to the economy. He is concerned with businesses leaving the town and a bigger tax burden on the homeowners. He supports the police and fire departments. He is a business owner and understands if there is no money to pay for things, you have to lay off workers. He is concerned with unemployment. He cannot support the budget. He indicated the town needs to be more business friendly.

Dave Dearborn, 144 East Road, addressed the hearing. He commented how everyone thinks the economic problems of the town happened over night. It has been in the works for the past ten to fifteen years due to the past leadership of the town. The town is unfriendly to businesses and he knows personally of a business which wanted to open in East Windsor but because of the hold ups at the town hall, the business deal never happened. This concerns him. He has been a resident of the town all of his life and he is embarrassed how this town treats businesses. The last Selectman never did anything for the town and nothing in the town is new. He has a business on Newberry Road and the town has been constantly fighting with him.

Paul Anderson, Chairman of the East Windsor WPCA, addressed the hearing. He wanted to clarify something that was previously said regarding the sewer. However, he misunderstood what was being asked and didn't pertain to the WPCA.

Kathy Parakilas, 12 Joseph Farm Road addressed the hearing. She supports the town budget. She is concerned with the No Child Left Behind report regarding the Board Brook Elementary School. She feels teachers work hard and deserve the support of the town. She understands families are struggling and she has lost her job six months ago, but she supports the budget.

Bill Loos, 44 Melrose Road, addressed the hearing. He has been a resident of the town for seventy-five years. He believes the school budget should be lower; they have had an increase for the last three years. He indicated towns across the state and nation are laying off teachers due to the economic times. Doesn't understand how they can get raises constantly. He quoted the last test scores of East Windsor students which were below average. He believes the three assistant principal positions, curriculum coordinator position could be cut from the budget freeing up almost \$500,000. He is going to vote no for the budget.

Ed Lane, 22 Perri Lane, addressed the hearing. He feels that the town will fall backwards if the budget isn't passed. Of the last ten years, of which he has been a resident, the budget fights have been a constant. He has a child in the school system and supports the school system, and he also supports the police and fire departments. He supports the budget.

Chris Willey, 19 Perri Lane, addressed the hearing. He indicated his wife is a teacher, and she did not receive such a healthy raise. He insisted most of the increases to the salary and benefits line are due to the increasing cost of health insurance. He does support the budget and plans to vote yes on May 11, 2010.

Chairman Jack Mannette indicated that the Board of Finance will meet tomorrow to discuss all the input they received and will recommend a budget to referendum. The referendum will be scheduled for May 11, 2010. If it is passed, on May 12, 2010 the Board of Finance will meet to set the mill rate. If it fails, on May 12, 2010 a public hearing will be held and the Board of Finance will meet and recommend a budget for the second referendum to take place on May 25, 2010. He thanked all for coming out and participating in the hearing.

A motion to adjourn was not entertained.

The meeting ended at 9:30 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Denise M. Piotrowicz  
Recording Secretary