

**BOARD OF FINANCE
TOWN OF EAST WINDSOR
11 Rye Street, East Windsor, Connecticut**

**MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING
Wednesday, May 15, 2013 at 7:30 p.m.**

DRAFT DOCUMENT – These minutes are not official until approved at a subsequent meeting

Members Present: Jason Bowsza, Jerilyn Corso, Danelle Godeck, Joseph Pellegrini, Kathleen Pippin, and Sharon Tripp.
Members Absent: All members were present.
Alternate Present:
Alternate Absent: Paulette Broder and Gilbert Hayes
Others: Catherine Cabral, Town Treasurer; Denise Menard, First Selectman; Selectmen: Alan Baker; Dale Nelson; Richard Pippin; James Richard; Joseph Sauerhoeffter; Residents: Andy Heath; Bill Loos, Chuck Riggott,
Press: Gail Montany, Journal Inquirer; Ted Glanzer, Patch.

I. Call to Order:

Chairman Bowsza called the Meeting to Order at 7:30 p.m.

II. Time and Place of Meeting:

Town Hall Meeting Room, 11 Rye Street, Broad Brook, CT.

III. Appointment of Alternates:

Chairman Bowsza noted all members are present this evening; it will not be necessary to appoint an Alternate member for this meeting.

IV. Added Agenda Items:

No Added Agenda Items this evening.

MOTION: To ADOPT the Agenda for the May 15, 2013 Regular Meeting of the Board of Finance as presented.

**Tripp moved/Pellegrini seconded/VOTE: In Favor: Unanimous
(No one opposed/no abstentions)**

V. Approval of Minutes:

- **DRAFT Public Hearing Minutes of April 16, 2013:**

MOTION: To APPROVE the Draft Minutes of Public Hearing dated April 16, 2013 as presented.

Pellegrini moved/Corso seconded/VOTE: In Favor: Unanimous

- **DRAFT Regular Meeting Minutes of April 17, 2013:**

MOTION: To APPROVE the Draft Minutes of Regular Meeting Minutes dated April 17, 2013 as presented.

Pellegrini moved/Tripp seconded/VOTE: In Favor: Unanimous

VI. Public Participation: No one requested to speak.

VII. Communications:

- **E-mail re: debt refunding via direct loan:** Treasurer Cabral provided the Board with a copy of an e-mail from Mr. Khamsyvoravong of Webster which was offered as follow-up to Monday's discussion of advance refinancing a portion of current debt. In his e-mail Xay specified a refunding cost of approximately \$20,000 for legal and savings of approximately \$114,000 on approximately \$2.5 million of debt. Ms. Cabral referenced previous discussion with the Board regarding the possible refunding of two pieces of the current debt. Ms. Cabral indicated she has discussed the refunding with the Bond Attorney. The second refinancing of this debt would not have to be taken to referendum as any debt from 2004 had already been approved at referendum in 2004. Ms. Cabral recalled the direct loan refunding option would be offered to three other banks as part of a bid process. The refunding would require the use of an escrow account, which necessitates the use of the Bond Attorney at an additional cost of \$20,000.

VIII. Monthly Reports/a. Treasurer:

Treasurer Cabral provided the Board with her memo dated May 10, 2013 which offers the following update of Revenue receipt for the month of April, 2013:

- Overall revenues in the amount of \$3,179,510, which is at 101.22%
- State revenue in the amount \$2,812,182.
- Local revenue increased by \$27,142 which includes \$14,457 in Town Clerk's fees, \$4,213 from Building Permit fees, and \$2,613 from Planning and Zoning fees.
- General Fund cash balance is \$12,057,108
- Webster General Fund cash balance is \$2,454,179.
- Tax Collections – net of refunds – are \$340,186.

Assessor's Report:

Treasurer Cabral provided the Board with Assessor Madore's memo dated May 9, 2013 which offered the following summary of activity through April 29, 2013:

- 48 accounts appealed, 30 appeals granted, 18 appeals denied
- Total assessed value of all cases was \$39,026,030, reductions granted in the amount of \$2,864,770 for a drop of 7.34% and a tax loss of \$70,835.
- Reduction represents less than one-third of a percent of the net grand list figure.

Ms. Madore also noted the staff of the Assessor's Office continues to reach out to elderly and homebound taxpayers regarding tax relief.

Treasurer Cabral reported she, Assessor Madore, and Tax Collector Lord visited the Senior Center to discuss the Town's role regarding grants, the re-valuation process, rental assistance and tax relief, and the budget to some extent. They also explained how to access the information online.

Tax Collector's Report:

Treasurer Cabral provided the Board with various reports submitted by Tax Collector Lord regarding the Town's cash position as of the end of April, 2013:

- Amount received - \$203,460 – exceeds the amount anticipated.
- Percentage of revenue received for 2012-2013 is 100.69%

b. 2012-2013 Budget added appropriations/transfers:

- **Assessor's Department:**

MOTION: To TRANSFER \$555 from Account #1-01-10-1035-1-101-0000-1 Assessor – Salary Part-time to Account #1-01-55-9447-7-799-0110-0 CIP Reserve – Assessor Revaluation, and forward to Town Meeting. (Also known as Transfer #24).

Tripp moved/Pellegrini seconded

DISCUSSION: None.

VOTE: In Favor: Unanimous (No one opposed/no abstentions)

- **Town Auditor:**

MOTION: To transfer \$10 from Account #1-01-10-1020-3-330-0000-0 Professional Services to Account #1-01-10-1020-6-600-000-0 Analysis Fee – Bank. (Also known as Transfer #25).

Tripp moved/Godek seconded

DISCUSSION: None

VOTE: In Favor: Unanimous (No one opposed/no abstentions)

IX. Matters referred from the Board of Selectmen:

Nothing presented this evening.

X. Unfinished Business/a. Auditor Election 2013 – 2014

Approved at Board of Finance Special Meeting held on May 13, 2013.

XI. New Business/a. Proposed Budget for Fiscal Year 2013-2014 Discussion:

1. Establish mill rate for Fiscal Year 2013-2014:

First referendum vote failed; mill rate to be determined after passage of budget.

2. 2nd referendum budget review and submission:

LET THE RECORD SHOW First Selectman Menard arrived at 7:45 p.m.

Chairman Bowsza suggested the voter's message seems to be that they are not looking for anything new this year. Ms. Godek concurred. She suggested the Board knew going into the referendum that this would be a difficult budget to pass, especially with the re-valuation. She suggested the Board has proposed additions which support the community – fire, ambulance, capital improvement projects (CIP); the Board is limited regarding adjustments to the Board of Education (BOE) budget. Ms. Godek agreed; the message is clear – the voters want a 2% increase as set by the Charter. Ms. Godek suggested the Board should reduce the budget increase to 1.99%

Mr. Pellegrini indicated he agreed with Ms. Godek. He suggested the Board has put money into the CIP, and funded the fire department and ambulance requests and the people are not interested in those services. Mr. Pellegrini felt the Board should go with a 1.98% increase for the second referendum.

Ms. Corso reported she agreed with Ms. Godek and Mr. Pellegrini and Mr. Heath's comments regarding the Charter. Ms. Corso indicated the Board's hands are tied with regard to the BOE budget; it's not as easy to let kids walk to school any longer. Ms. Corso agreed with Mr. Pellegrini to set the budget at a 1.98% increase as she didn't feel a 2.1% increase would pass.

Ms. Pippin indicated she agreed with her fellow Board members. She noted the Board worked very hard with the BOE.

Ms. Tripp suggested she is terribly disappointed in the failure of the budget. The enhancements proposed have been asked for year after year and they have been voted down year after year. If that's what the Town wants that's what the Board should give them.

Various documents were offered to the Board by Treasurer Cabral and First Selectman Menard to assist with budget review.

Chairman Bowsza offered a sheet of his suggested reductions which include several of the extra items requested this year. Mr. Bowsza indicated his reductions would bring the next budget proposal to an approximate 2.5% increase rather than the 1.98 or 1.99% discussed.

Mr. Pellegrini suggested the 3.69% increase proposes a budget of \$34,157,469. A reduction to an increase of 1.98% would require \$583,749 in cuts and propose a budget of \$34,833,787. Mr. Pellegrini indicated the philosophy of the CIP proposals was a 3% increase over last year's budget, which represented a proposed CIP budget of \$1,024,724. Mr. Pellegrini suggested to go to the 1.98% total budget increase the Board would need to cut \$320,000 from the CIP, which would represent a 2.3% increase over last year's budget for the CIP proposals. Chairman Bowsza suggested the Board all agreed that an investment in the infrastructure of the town was something they wanted to preserve. Ms. Corso suggested the Board needs to look at how the CIP Committee has prioritized the projects. Mr. Pellegrini suggested he, and fellow CIP Committee member Pippin, can attest to the fact that the CIP Committee spent several months reviewing all the requested projects.

Ms. Godek questioned the proposal for school security at \$171,337. Mr. Pellegrini indicated that project had been prioritized by the BOE as the most important project not to be taken out of the CIP list.

Mr. Pellegrini began his review of current CIP projects; he questioned the proposal for the thermal imagining cameras. He suggested the CIP Committee was trying to fund one or two each year; two cameras represent a request for \$28,000 in funding. Selectman Nelson suggested the goal is to purchase six cameras total; this request would be the purchase of cameras three and four.

Mr. Pellegrini suggested new requests this year include \$40,000 for the half-year fire fighter positions, \$50,000 for the ambulance association, and approximately \$200,000 to \$300,000 in BOE projects.

MOTION: To REDUCE funding for the ambulance under department account #5240-7-799-0602 from \$50,000 to zero.

Pellegrini moved/Pippin seconded

DISCUSSION: None.

VOTE: In Favor: Unanimous (No one opposed/no abstentions)

MOTION: To REDUCE funding for the East Windsor Fire Department part-time line under department account #2150-1-101 from \$40,000 to zero.

Pellegrini moved/Tripp seconded

DISCUSSION: None.

**VOTE: In Favor: Pellegrini/Godek/Corso/Tripp/Bowsza
Opposed: Pippin
Abstentions: No one**

Mr. Pellegrini and Ms. Corso noted the BOE budget has been reduced by \$200,000 previously. Mr. Pellegrini suggested last year the BOE had requested an increase of 7% and were given an increase of 4.6%

MOTION: To REDUCE the East Windsor Board of Education budget \$300,000 from \$20,972,530 to \$20,672,530.

Pellegrini moved

DISCUSSION: Ms. Cabral clarified that the BOE present request is \$20,972,530 so the request is a reduction of \$118,000.

Mr. Pellegrini retracted his original motion

MOTION: To REDUCE the East Windsor Board of Education budget request from \$20,972,530 to \$20,672,530.

Pellegrini moved/Tripp seconded

DISCUSSION: None

VOTE: In Favor: Unanimous (No one opposed/no abstentions)

Discussion continued regarding the BOE budget vs. the Town budget, including contractual obligations. Ms. Cabral reported she has talked to Assessor Madore about the \$8080 funding for the tax relief. She noted no one has asked for any assistance. If that funding was cut it could be put in again next year.

MOTION: To REMOVE \$8080 for tax relief from department #1042.

Godek moved/Pellegrini seconded

DISCUSSION: Chairman Bowsza indicated he didn't want to take tax relief out of the budget; the intent was to establish a revolving fund but it doesn't get off the ground.

**VOTE: In Favor: Godek/Pellegrini/Corso/Tripp
Opposed: Bowsza/Pippin
Abstentions: No one**

Discussion returned to CIP projects. Ms. Corso questioned the BOE's requested funding for removal and installation of an underground oil tank; she noted it's listed as the least important under CIP prioritization. Mr. Pellegrini clarified it's not the least important item; that's the point where the 3% increase cut off. Mr. Sauerhoeffer suggested the oil tank replacement has been on the CIP list for three years. Ms. Cabral noted the request for \$12,000 as the Town's portion of funding for a 12 or 20 passenger van. First Selectman Menard questioned not providing funding for a vehicle which would be more cost efficient. Ms. Corso suggested it's a low priority item on the CIP list. Ms. Godek suggested she realizes the Town should have an emergency generator but it's a new request. Discussion followed regarding the specifics of this request; Mr. Sauerhoeffer felt it was a generator requested by the Public Works Department. First Selectman Menard later clarified that Mr. Sauerhoeffer was correct; it's a generator to operate the gas tanks, etc. at the Public Works Garage. Other items under considered were (BBFD) supply hose for 3 pumpers at \$10,000, light towers at \$18,000, GIS system at \$10,000 in the Town budget and \$15,000 in the IT budget. Ms. Tripp recalled funding for the washer/dryer for fire department gear seemed to be a 50/50 split as to its need; the Warehouse Pont Fire Department already has one

while this funding request would be for the Broad Brook Fire Department. Ms. Corso felt the funding should be left in if it includes gear replacement. Ms. Corso cited concern for deleting safety items; Ms. Godek concurred. The Board noted other requests for two police cruisers, an animal control vehicle replacement, three pieces of replacement equipment for Park and Recreation. Mr. Pellegrini agreed with everyone's concerns but noted the 2:1 vote against adding anything new, which brings the Board back to the current discussions. He concurred that the CIP budget has been cut a lot.

MOTION: To REDUCE the GIS System update from \$10,000 to zero.
Pellegrini moved/Godek seconded

DISCUSSION: None

VOTE: In Favor: Unanimous (No one opposed/no abstentions)

MOTION: To reduce the Emergency Management request for light towers from \$18,000 to zero.

Pellegrini moved/Tripp seconded

DISCUSSION: None

VOTE: In Favor: Unanimous (No one opposed/no abstentions)

MOTION: To reduce the Broad Brook Fire Department request for supply hose for three pumpers from \$10,000 to \$5,000.

Pellegrini moved/Tripp seconded

DISCUSSION: None

VOTE: In Favor: Unanimous (No one opposed/no abstentions)

MOTION: To TAKE A FIVE MINUTE BREAK.

Corso moved/Pellegrini seconded/VOTE: Unanimous

The Board RECESSED at 8:50 p.m. and RECONVENED at 8:55 p.m.

The Board began with discussion of the request for funding for pavement management vs. chip sealing roads. Ms. Cabral reported the Town receives LOCIP grants for the chip sealing, and it also saves the Town money in the long run.

MOTION: To REDUCE the pavement management request from \$50,000 to \$10,000.

Pellegrini moved/Corso seconded

DISCUSSION: None

VOTE: In Favor: Unanimous (No one opposed/no abstentions)

MOTION: To reduce the request for funding for the POCD from \$20,000 to \$10,000.

Pellegrini moved/Corso seconded

DISCUSSION: None

VOTE: In Favor: Unanimous (No one opposed/no abstentions)

First Selectman Menard suggested the Board could reduce the Assessor's request for revaluation as the Town will be investing in new software.

MOTION: To REDUCE the request for funding for the Revaluation for 10/1/2017 from \$40,000 to \$25,000.

Pellegrini moved/Pippin seconded

DISCUSSION: None

VOTE: In Favor: Unanimous (No one opposed/no abstentions)

MOTION: To REDUCE the request for two thermal imaging cameras each for the WHPFD/BBFD from \$28,000 to zero.

Pellegrini moved/Pippin seconded

DISCUSSION: None

VOTE: In Favor: Unanimous (No one opposed/no abstentions)

The Board considered eliminating the request for grant funding. First Selectman Menard suggested leaving some funding in place as the Town never has any money allocated towards matching funds when any department applies for a grant.

MOTION: To REDUCE the request for grant funding from \$10,000 to \$5,000.

Pellegrini moved/Tripp seconded

DISCUSSION: None

VOTE: In Favor: Unanimous (No one opposed/no abstentions)

MOTION: To REDUCE the East Windsor Board of Education budget an additional \$55,000 to a total budget of \$20,617,530.

Pellegrini moved/Pippin seconded

DISCUSSION: None

VOTE: In Favor: Unanimous (No one opposed/no abstentions)

The Board reviewed the cuts made. Calculations indicated the current budget reductions made total \$676,067, which results in a total budget going to referendum of \$34,833,536 and represents a 1.98% increase over the previous year. This budget represents a 4.27 increase over the current mill rate of 24.742.

MOTION: To SEND TO REFERENDUM on May 28, 2013 a proposed budget of \$34,833,536 with a proposed mill rate of 28.9964.

Pellegrini moved/Tripp seconded

DISCUSSION: None

VOTE: In Favor: Unanimous (No one opposed/no abstentions)

b. Discussion of contact negotiations:

Chairman Bowsza noted he was asked by a member to add this item to the Agenda. He indicated he believed the intent was to get an overview of the status of union negotiations.

First Selectman Menard reported there are presently five unions – Clerical, Department of Public Works, Dispatchers, Police, and Supervisors - which represent 59 full-time employees. The contract for the Clerical Union remains to be settled. First Selectman Menard indicated that one of the charges for the Selectmen's Office is to prepare a calendar of the various contracts. The expiration dates of the contracts had been staggered, and could be again; the Charter limits the duration of the contracts.

First Selectman Menard reported that members of the Board have been asked in the past to be involved in contract negotiation. Most of the negotiations occur during the day so many of the members of the Board have passed on the invitation. Ms. Corso indicated she had participated in the negotiation process; involvement had been very informative and has opened her eyes to the difficulty of negotiations.

Chairman Bowsza queried the Board if their questions had been answered. Ms. Pippin suggested she had been looking for more specifics on the contract. She felt the Town should stay at 2% raises rather than 3% or more, and raises shouldn't be given every year. First Selectman Menard reported that once a contract is signed it's filed in the Town Clerk's Office and becomes public information available to everyone. She suggested it's very difficult to negotiate contracts; if the Town takes too much away from employees it suffers losses in arbitration.

Ms. Pippin was asked if she would like to be included in negotiations. Ms. Pippin declined, citing difficulty attending meetings during the day.

XII. Invoice Authorization:

There were no invoices presented for signature at this Meeting.

XIII. Adjournment:

MOTION: To **ADJOURN** this Meeting at 9:55 p.m.

Godek moved/Corso seconded/VOTE: In Favor: Unanimous

Respectfully submitted: _____
Peg Hoffman, Recording Secretary, East Windsor Board of Finance