

**BOARD OF FINANCE
TOWN OF EAST WINDSOR
11 RYE STREET
EAST WINDSOR, CONNECTICUT 06088**

MINUTES OF SPECIAL MEETING

Wednesday, May 29, 2013 at 8:00 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:
Alternates Absent: Paulette Broder and Gilbert Hayes
Others: Catherine Cabral, Town Treasurer; Denise Menard, First Selectman; Selectmen: Richard Pippin; James Richard; various residents; Board of Education: Teresa Kane, Superintendent of the East Windsor School system.
Press: Gail Montany, Journal Inquirer; Ted Glanzer, Patch.

I. Call to Order:

Chairman Bowsza convened the Special Meeting of the Budget Workshop to Order at 8:00 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. Public Participation:

Public comment was taken at the Budget Hearing held prior to this Meeting.

V. New Business/a. Proposed Budget for Fiscal Year 2013-2014 Discussion/1) Establish a mill rate for Fiscal Year 2013-2014; and 2) 3rd referendum budget review and submission:

Chairman Bowsza reported the second referendum failed by about 300 votes. He queried the Board members for comments:

Ms. Tripp reported she didn't want to see services cut. The cuts already made are detrimental to the growth of the town. She is also concerned that if the budget is voted down again and it goes to 2% as designated by the Charter the CIP projects might not be considered in that budget. Ms. Tripp indicated she didn't want to see the budget go to 2%, and she didn't want to see the Board of Education cut any further.

Ms. Godek suggested the Board set a budget that had a small increase in it to move the town forward, but it got voted down. She indicated she listened to comments made by taxpayers but the vote wasn't there. She felt the Board understood the 2% allowable under the Charter, and went to 1.98% to save the town the cost of a referendum. Ms. Godek recalled the Charter was voted in by a majority and the 2% was put in for a reason to at least provide a small amount to move the town forward but it's a miniscule amount. Ms. Godek also didn't want to see the school budget cut any further; the budget as presented already includes cutting staff. She cited the effect of these budgets on businesses and people choosing to move into East Windsor; why would they move here? Ms. Godek cited that costs are going up for everyone; she expects a tax increase because the Town pays the same increases that everyone else does. Ms. Godek felt the budget should be proposed at 2% or higher, noting there seemed to be more support for a higher budget during the Public Hearing than against an increase.

Mr. Pellegrini recalled that as a Board they looked at a lot things – they tried to explain the effect of the revaluation and the loss of a percentage of the Grand List which increased the mill rate. Regardless of this budget he would like to back 10 years and invest 1 mill rate every year and see what the revaluation would have looked like, and what the school system would have looked like. Mr. Pellegrini felt we wouldn't have had a negative revaluation. He suggested the Town isn't falling apart around us; we are all safe. But he noted someone like himself, with two kids and a lovely wife – he would like to stay here but if he could move a few miles and do better for his family – as a Dad at some time his rate of investment isn't enough to keep him here. Mr. Pellegrini felt the Board put out a 3.69% budget which was terrific budget. He suggested he makes investments in his home to keep it up; he felt that was what the Board was trying to do for the Town at the 3.69% budget. Mr. Pellegrini indicated he was happy with the budget as recently proposed, or even more.

Ms. Corso indicated she listened to the comments about the Board being voted in to do a job. She also questions what do people want? Many vote no; the cost of salaries and benefits was raised during comments and they think if there isn't money for that the salaries will get cut but that isn't how it works. A full position will be cut. Ms. Corso cited the Board has already cut over half a million dollars from the school budget. She recalled that someone said East Windsor is a small town and that's what makes us awesome. It also makes the budget a personal issue. Ms. Corso indicated she was fine with a budget proposed at 2% or higher, but she couldn't vote to go lower.

Ms. Pippin indicated she was impressed with the people who came out for the Budget Hearing. She suggested the Board wants suggestions. She cited Mr. Loos' comments

from a previous meeting, which she asked him to pass on to the Board of Education. Ms. Pippin indicated she loved East Windsor; she would like to see computers in all the schools and families not having to pay for everything. People deserve their pay. Everything is going up.

Chairman Bowsza suggested the 2% threshold was put in for a reason. He indicated the Board is here to do everything they can for every citizen. He is encouraged; this year's Board is on the same page. Chairman Bowsza suggested the present Board is a fantastic Board which works well together.

Chairman Bowsza asked First Selectman Menard for comments.

First Selectman Menard indicated she echoed Chairman Bowsza's comments; this is a wonderful Board which works hard together. She noted they make hard decisions, and while they don't always agree but you do come to a decision. It's difficult for her to hear that people think you don't think about the budget. With regard to the people who spoke tonight at the Public Hearing there were 13 in favor and 3 against going up on the budget. Salaries and benefits always go up; that's all we have, we are a service organization – the school sells education while the Town sells service and that's what goes up. The CIP (Capital Improvement Plan) goes up - someone asked if we have a five (5) year plan. First Selectman Menard indicated her recommendation would be to go up to at least 2%. She noted she spoke with the Assessor, the Tax Collector, and the Treasurer today. Timing to send out tax bills is tight when we go to a third referendum. Maybe if people know the proposed budget is 2% they will vote for it.

Treasurer Cabral noted that the financial staff have said in the past that going to a third referendum is difficult to get the tax bills out in time; the Assessor also agreed 2% would be helpful. She indicated she would ask the Board to go to 2%; it seemed to be what the people suggested. Treasurer Cabral indicated a 2% increase would relate to \$7,082.

Chairman Bowsza felt the consensus was that the Board didn't have an appetite to go lower; he questioned the Board's pleasure?

The Board reviewed previous cuts – elderly tax relief at \$8,000; thermal imaging cameras at \$14,000; \$40,000 from the fire departments; \$50,000 from the ambulance; \$320,000 in multiple line items from the CIP including significant reductions in road improvements; over \$500,000 from the Board of Education. The Board considered returning the additional funding to the elderly tax relief fund, but it was noted no one had applied for tax relief so the funding wouldn't be utilized. First Selectman Menard suggested returning the additional funding to the Board of Education budget; the Board concurred after noting there was little place on the Town side where \$7,000 would be effective.

Discussion followed regarding staying at a 2% increase or going higher, or returning to the 3.69% originally proposed. Ms. Corso recalled that someone had asked how much it would take to put the Town where it should be – that was the first budget proposed, that

would be the dollar figure you would divide by. The Board reviewed the comments heard at the Budget Hearing vs. the actuality of the voter turnout. Discussion continued regarding how the 2% allowed under the Charter would be allocated vs. a 2% budget proposed by the Board. Treasurer Cabral clarified that under the Charter whatever the budget line item is as of June 15th that would be the allocation to the new year.

MOTION: To ADD \$7,082 back to the Board of Education budget to make the 2013-2014 budget a 2% increase.

Corso moved/Tripp seconded

DISCUSSION: Dr. Teresa Kane indicated this has been a good Board to work with, and not because there is another \$7,000 going to the Board of Education Budget. Dr. Kane suggested the Board has a difficult job; she felt they look at us all as being departments of the Town. Dr. Kane indicated she agreed with Ms. Corso; it's frustrating that people don't vote. She noted the Board of Education decides where cuts will be made and parents will be shocked. Dr. Kane indicated funding reductions have caused the consideration of the elimination of nine teaching positions, two administrators, two secretaries, three Summer custodians, and five aides positions, some reduction in transportation services will occur, stipends will be eliminated, and there will be a reduction in supplies and textbooks. Dr. Kane suggested shame on people for not getting out to vote, and this is what happens when people don't exercise their right to vote.

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

Treasurer Cabral reviewed revised calculations for the Board. She indicated the new proposed 2% budget figure for the June 11th referendum would be \$34,840,618 with a mill rate of 29.7791.

MOTION: To send to referendum a proposed budget total of \$34,840,618 and a mill rate of 29.7791.

Corso moved/Pippin seconded

DISCUSSION: None

VOTE: In Favor: Unanimous (No one opposed/No Abstentions)

VI. Adjournment

MOTION: To ADJOURN this Meeting at 8:35 p.m.

Godek moved/Corso seconded

DISCUSSION: None.

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

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