

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

MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING

Wednesday, April 20, 2016 at 7:30 p.m.

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

Members Present: Jerilyn Corso, Cynthia Herms, Steve Smith, William Syme, and James Richards
Members Absent: Kathleen Pippin
Alternate Members Present: Luiz Valdez
Alternate Members Absent: Paulette Broder
Others: Robert Maynard, Kimberly Lord, Jason Bowsza, Richard Pippin and Andy Hoffman
Press: None

I. Call to Order/Pledge of Alligiance

Chairwoman Jerilyn Corso called the Regular Meeting to Order at 7:41 p.m. in the East Windsor Town Hall. Everyone in the room stood and recited the pledge of allegiance.

II. Time and Place of Meeting

Wednesday, April 20, 2016 at 7:30 p.m. in the Town Hall Meeting Room.

III. Attendance/Appointment of Alternates

Chairwoman Jerilyn Corso indicated that Ms. Kathleen Pippin will not be attending the meeting and a motion would be in order appointing an alternate as a voting member.

It was **MOVED** (Richards) and **SECONDED** (Smith) and **PASSED** (4-0) (In Favor: C. Herms, S. Smith, W. Syme and J. Richards; Opposed: None; Abstain: None) that Mr. Luiz Valdez be appointed as a voting member.

IV. Approval of Meeting Minutes

a. Special Meeting, March 17, 2016 – 7:00 p.m.

It was **MOVED** (Herms) and **SECONDED** (Valdez) and **PASSED** (5-0) (In Favor: C. Herms, S. Smith, W. Syme, L. Valdez, J. Richards; Opposed: None, Abstain: None) that the Board of Finance approves the Special Meeting Minutes of March 17, 2016 at 7:00 p.m. as presented.

b. Special Meeting, March 17, 2016 – 7:30 p.m.

It was **MOVED** (Herms) and **SECONDED** (Smith) and **PASSED** (5-0) (In Favor: C. Herms, S. Smith, W. Syme, L. Valdez, J. Richards; Opposed: None, Abstain: None) that the Board of Finance approves the Special Meeting Minutes of March 17, 2016 at 7:30 p.m. as presented.

c. Public Hearing, March 23, 2016

It was **MOVED** (Herms) and **SECONDED** (Smith) and **PASSED** (5-0) (In Favor: C. Herms, S. Smith, W. Syme, L. Valdez, J. Richards; Opposed: None, Abstain: None) that the Board of Finance approves the Public Hearing Minutes of March 23, 2016 as presented.

d. Budget Workshop, March 23, 2016

It was **MOVED** (Herms) and **SECONDED** (Smith) and **PASSED** (5-0) (In Favor: C. Herms, S. Smith, W. Syme, L. Valdez, J. Richards; Opposed: None, Abstain: None) that the Board of Finance approves the Budget Workshop Minutes of March 23, 2016 as presented.

e. Budget Workshop, March 31, 2016

It was **MOVED** (Herms) and **SECONDED** (Smith) and **PASSED** (5-0) (In Favor: C. Herms, S. Smith, W. Syme, L. Valdez, J. Richards; Opposed: None, Abstain: None) that the Board of Finance approves the Budget Workshop Minutes of March 31, 2016 as presented.

f. Budget Workshop, April 4, 2016

It was **MOVED** (Herms) and **SECONDED** (Valdez) and **PASSED** (5-0) (In Favor: C. Herms, S. Smith, W. Syme, L. Valdez, J. Richards; Opposed: None, Abstain: None) that the Board of Finance approves the Budget Workshop Minutes of April 4, 2016 as presented.

V. Public Participation

Mr. Andy Hoffman of 6 Acorn Drive addressed the Board. He is a member of the Economic and Development Commission and he may be a day late as he looked at the agenda and noted that the budget has already been approved. However, he wants to let the Board know the importance of commercial development and the impact of that development to the tax rates of the town. He mentioned the surrounding towns, South Windsor, Windsor, Windsor Locks, Enfield and Ellington and how those towns' tax rates compare and their commercial development. He noted that South Windsor and Windsor both have high tax rates, however, have a full time economic development

professional who knows how to draw businesses to their communities. Windsor Locks shares a professional Suffield to elevate the cost of a full time person. He said that residential development is good for a town; however, one must think that every new home equals 2.3 children, which puts a strain on the Board of Education and doesn't help the tax base, but increases the tax base. When businesses come to the town, it helps with the tax rates. Two of the biggest tax payers in the Town of East Windsor are Walmart and Southern Auto Auction. The town does have an economic development professional, but he is only on a part-time basis and is limited as to how much time he can spend working on courting businesses. He believes that more money should be spent on a professional to spend more time in economic development. He gave an example of a town in Florida that recently hired a economic professional and bought in a business to the town. He thanked the Board for their time.

Mr. Jason Bowsza of 34 Rye Street addressed the Board. He told the Board of Selectmen at last night's meeting that this Board has done a very good job with the budget this year looking at the needs of the town and the town's ability to pay for those needs. Thank you!

Ms. Denise Menard of 73 Miller Road addressed the Board. She thanked the Board for not having a conversation during the public participation of this meeting. She attended the Board of Selectmen meeting last night and the Board responded to some of the participation. Thank you!

VI. Communications

Ms. Kimberly Lord, Treasurer, indicated to the Board the only communication she had was a copy of a law suit that was just served upon the Town. The subject of the law suit was discussed in a newspaper article recently. The Town Attorney has been given the paperwork to handle.

VII. Monthly Reports

a. Town Financial Reports

Ms. Lord indicated the monthly financial reports from her office; the Tax Collector and the Assessor were in their Board packets. She asked if the Board had any questions regarding any of those reports. She commented the Tax Collector has approximately \$23,000 remaining to collect to meet the budget requirements. Ms. Corso commented that the Assessor indicates the decrease of \$257,000 in the Grand List. Ms. Lord indicated she has made that change in the Grand List and on the budget sheets.

b. Transfer Requests

• **Transfer No. 25 – Legal Expense**

Ms. Lord commented the transfer being requested is \$14,450 is for legal expenses. The transfer is from Debt Services (910800 61100) to Town Counsel (57400). The legal line is over-expended and debt service has a surplus due to timing of the Modular project.

It was **MOVED** (Richards) and **SECONDED** (Smith) and **PASSED** (5-0) (In Favor: C. Herms, S. Smith, W. Syme, L. Valdez, J. Richards; Opposed: None, Abstain: None) that the Board of Finance approves the requested Transfer No. 25 transferring \$14,450 from Debt Services (91080061100) to Town Counsel (57400) as presented.

• **Transfer No. 26 – Police**

Ms. Lord commented the transfer being requested is \$9,600 is for police department. The transfer is from Workers' Comp (91030058250) to Dispatcher Salary (51660). Due to the contract settlement, retroactive payments and salary increases.

It was **MOVED** (Syme) and **SECONDED** (Valdez) that the Board of Finance approves the requested Transfer No. 26 transferring \$9,600 from Workers' Comp (91030058250) to Dispatcher Salary (51660) as presented.

A discussion was held. It was noted that the last contract was settled and before dispatcher contract settled, additional raise and longevity has to be paid. This amount should carry the line until the end of the year.

A vote was taken:

In Favor: C. Herms, S. Smith, W. Syme, L. Valdez, J. Richards
Opposed: None
Abstain: None

Motion carried.

• **Transfer No. 27 – Ethics Commission**

Ms. Lord commented the transfer being requested is \$600 is for the Ethics Commission Services. The transfer is from Charter Revision – Recording Secretary to Ethics Commission Services. This request is for the

recording secretary from last August. The invoice has just been submitted on April 12, 2016.

It was **MOVED** (Herms) and **SECONDED** (Valdez) and **PASSED** (5-0) (In Favor: C. Herms, S. Smith, W. Syme, L. Valdez, J. Richards; Opposed: None, Abstain: None) that the Board of Finance approves the requested Transfer No. 27 transferring \$600 from Charter Revision – Recording Secretary to Ethic Commission Services as presented.

VIII. Unfinished Business

None

IX. New Business

a. Approve FY 17 budget and forward to referendum

Chairwoman Corso mentioned to the Board that this was their last opportunity to discuss any parts of the proposed budget before everything is signed and sent to referendum. If anyone would like to revisit any of sections, this would be the time to do so.

Mr. Smith commented that he agrees with Mr. Hoffman and the town needs to have an economic development professional; however, it is not this Board's responsibility to add employees or set policy that is the responsibility of the Board of Selectmen. He agrees that the town needs to do something. Ms. Corso remarked she does not disagree and believes it is the responsibility of the Board of Selectmen to add that position. Ms. Lord reminded the Board they added an additional \$5,000 to that line and it is now being funded at \$15,000. It was suggested the Town should try to pursue sharing a person for that position as Windsor Locks and Suffield does currently. Mr. Richards remarked the cost of a full time position could be anywhere from \$80,000 to \$100,000.

Ms. Herms indicated that the elimination of the part-time position in the building department has been on her mind. She does not feel it is fair to single out one employee as there are seven other part-time positions in the Town Hall and deleting this position is not a substantial savings to the Town. It was suggested cutting an hour from each part-time position to save some money.

It was **MOVED** (Herms) and **SECONDED** (Smith) that the Board of Finance increase the Building Department part-time salary line by \$5,570.

A lengthy discussion was held. It was noted a citizen from the Town had mentioned it will take three weeks for an inspection to be performed as the building department is very busy. Someone heard a rumor that due to the short staff problem within in the building department, staff members have been unable to go to lunch. Ms. Herms commented she does not know the part-time staff member that would have been cut, but she felt she was singling them out for something that was out of their control.

A vote was taken:

In Favor: C. Herms, S. Smith, W. Syme, L. Valdez, J. Richards
Opposed: None
Abstain: None

Motion carried.

Mr. Richards wanted to revisit the Senior Center cut of \$2,500 on senior programs. Some people believe that the cost of \$2,500 is to pay to escort seniors on trips. It was suggested the donations by seniors could be used for such costs, but some seniors who are on a fixed income cannot afford the costs of the trips and would not be able to attend. As a Board, he understands that all departments have to be looked to see if there is spending that can be cut.

It was **MOVED** (Syme) and **SECONDED** (Herms) that the Board of Finance add back \$2,500 to the Senior Center programs line.

A discussion was held. Mr. Richards indicated he originally voted against taking the \$2,500 out of programs. He said to take a look at the budget five years ago, the department has not had any increases for quite a while for all of the programs that are provided by the Senior Center. Ms. Herms added that the Senior Center has many programs for the seniors including meals-on-wheels, transportation, lunches, health programs and other social programs. Mr. Richards remarked the \$2,500 covers the costs for the trip leader's admissions and lunches. Mr. Smith commented the children of the town have no voice or income and cannot vote, we should give them something. It was suggested to increase the price of the ticket to have the extra money pay for the trip leader. The fear in doing that would deter attendance as it would be cheaper for them to pay for themselves rather than go on the sponsored Senior Center trip. Someone inquired if chaperones on school trips pay their own way or does the school pay for their ticket. It was answered that chaperones pay for their own tickets.

A vote was taken:

In Favor: C. Herms, W. Syme, and L. Valdez
Opposed: S. Smith and J. Richards
Abstain: None

Motion carried

Ms. Lord discussed the fund balance and transferring monies from the fund balance to the budget revenues line. Last year, \$200,000 was used and this year it is proposed to \$250,000, an additional \$50,000. She indicated that the fund balance which is the unassigned or available, the General Fund balance has increased to approximately \$7,633,103 is approximately 21.5% of the adopted budget for fiscal year 2015. Ms. Lord felt comfortable transferring \$250,000 out of the fund balance into the budget revenue.

It was **MOVED** (Syme) and **SECONDED** (Herms) that the Board of Finance transfer \$250,000 to the budget revenue from the General Fund Balance.

A discussion was held. Mr. Smith felt that the money should be given back to the taxpayers and transferring these funds is like kicking the can down the road. He mentioned that other towns have transferred \$850,000 to balance their budget. Mr. Richards indicated that the Grand list has decreased and local real estate market is still down.

In Favor: C. Herms, W. Syme, and L. Valdez
Opposed: S. Smith and J. Richards
Abstain: None

Motion carried.

A brief discussion was then held regarding the Warehouse Point Fire District and the MOU (Memorandum of Understanding) that was signed between the Town of East Windsor and the Warehouse Point Fire District. The Town will collect the district's taxes and earn 2% of what it collected. The bills will go out in July.

It was **MOVED** (Herms) and **SECONDED** (Richards) and **PASSED** (5-0) (In Favor: C. Herms, S. Smith, W. Syme, L. Valdez, J. Richards; Opposed: None, Abstain: None) that the Board of Finance approves the adjusted budget for fiscal year 2016-2017 in the amount of \$37,100,348 or an increase in spending of 2.05% and a mill rate of 31.76 and sends the budget to referendum on May 10, 2016.

b. Approved Referendum Questions

Ms. Corso indicated there are two sets of suggested referendum questions for the Board to review and choose a set which will be on the ballot. Those sets were referred to as Option No. 1 or Option No. 2. Ms. Lord gave a brief description of those questions.

A brief discussion was held.

It was **MOVED** (Syme) and **SECONDED** (Richards) and **PASSED** (5-0) (In Favor: C. Herms, S. Smith, W. Syme, L. Valdez, J. Richards; Opposed: None, Abstain: None) that the Board of Finance approves Option No. 1 of the referendum questions to be used on the referendum ballot.

c. State Revenue FY 16 – Discuss Spending Freeze

Ms. Lord remarked due to the State of Connecticut budget problems as the revenue projections are expected to be decreased due to the financial constraints of the State, she inquired if a spending freeze should be placed upon the town's departments. The Tax Collector has been aggressive collecting taxes. The State has not yet released ECS Grant figures. It was the general consensus to revisit the spending freeze at the next regular meeting.

d. Heart and Hypertension Fund

Ms. Lord indicated it has been suggested to create separate fund for heart and hypertension claims. The line has only expended \$75,000 this year and it is budgeted at \$125,000 next year. There is possible settlement of one claim for \$70,000

A brief discussion was held.

It was **MOVED** (Richards) and **SECONDED** (Smith) and **PASSED** (5-0) (In Favor: C. Herms, S. Smith, W. Syme, L. Valdez, J. Richards; Opposed: None, Abstain: None) that the Board of Finance authorizes Ms. Kimberly Lord, Treasurer, to create a Heart and Hypertension fund for FY 17.

X. Board Member Comments

Mr. Richards wished Mr. Valdez best of luck in his future endeavors as this will be his last meeting. He thanked him for his service.

Ms. Corso thanked all of the Board Members for all of their hard work during the budget process and hopes the approved budget passes the first referendum on May 10, 2016.

XI. Adjournment

It was **MOVED** (Valdez) and **SECONDED** (Herms) and **PASSED** (5-0) (In Favor: C. Herms, S. Smith, W. Syme, L. Valdez, J. Richards; Opposed: None, Abstain: None) that the Board of Finance adjourns the Regular Meeting of April 20, 2016 at 9:04 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Denise M. Piotrowicz
Substitute Recording Secretary