

**BOARD OF FINANCE
TOWN OF EAST WINDSOR
11 RYE STREET
BROAD BROOK, CONNECTICUT 06016**

**MINUTES OF WORKSHOP
Wednesday, March 22, 2017, at 7:00 p.m.**

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

Regular Members Present: Jerilyn Corso (Chairman) Cindy Herms, Kathy Pippin; Jim Richards, Steve Smith, and Bill Syme,

Regular Members Absent: None.

Alternates Present: Paulette Broder.

Alternate Absent: Danelle Godek

Others: **Acting Town Treasurer:** Gayle Carolus; **Selectmen:** Richard P. Pippin, Jr., Deputy First Selectman; Jason Bowsza; Dale Nelson; **East Windsor Public Schools:** Dr. Theresa Kane, Superintendent; Dr. Christine DeBarge, Assistant Superintendent; Andrew Paquette, SFO, Business Management Services provided byTMSolution, Inc.; **Board of Education:** Cathy Simonelli, Chairman; Kathy Bilodeau, Kate Carey-Trull, William Raber; **East Windsor Police Department:** Chief Edward DeMarco, Deputy Chief Roger Hart; **Department of Public Works:** Len Norton, Director; Joe Sauerhoefer, Operations Manager.

Press: No one from the press was present.

1. **Call to Order:**

Chairman Corso called the Public Hearing to Order at 7:06 p.m. The Board stood to recite the Pledge of Allegiance at the opening of the Public Hearing.

2. **Time and Place of Meeting:**

Wednesday, March 22, 2017 at 7:06 p.m. at the East Windsor Town Hall (11 Rye Street, Broad Brook, CT.)

3. **Appointment of Alternates:**

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

4. **Budget Workshop/a. Board of Education:**

Dr. Theresa Kane, Superintendent; Dr. Christine DeBarge, Assistant Superintendent; Andrew Paquette, SFO, Business Management Services provided byTMSolution, Inc.;

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and Cathy Simonelli, Chairman of the Board of Education, joined the Board at the table. Board of Education Members Kathy Bilodeau, Kate Carey Trull, and William Raber were present in the audience.

Board of Finance (BOF) Chairman Corso noted that BOF Member Syme had requested information regarding the year to date expenditure amount and percentage. Mr. Paquette reported the figure is \$15,097,566.02, which represents 68% of the expenditures made to date. BOF Chairman Corso requested an electronic copy be sent to the BOF members.

BOF Chairman Corso opened discussion.

BOF Member Syme began with the following questions:

- With regard to line 18 on page 1 entitled CARRY OVER, he suggested if the Town establishes a 1% Fund that monetary contribution would be approximately \$221,000; what makes up the remaining balance? Mr. Paquette reported the remainder is unexpended money from the spent tuition revolving fund for 2 students that come in from another community and also money from Hartford Choice. It's carry over funds because it's not part of the Town's money. BOF Chairman Corso advised everyone that the Town Attorney has indicated that the BOF can create a 1% Fund but can not create the rules as it's not a policy making board. The BOF must recommend the establishment of the 1% Fund to the Board of Selectman and request that a Memo of Understanding be created. BOF Chairman Corso indicated she would send a request to the First Selectman asking the establishment of the 1% Fund be added as an agenda discussion item for the next BOS Meeting.

BOF Member Syme continued with the following questions:

- Some of the salaries seem high; he began with a reference to salaries under Central Services. BOF Member Syme suggested the total salary increase from last year to this year is 6.7%. Dr. Kane indicated a staff member had been moved from another school position into the Central Services area.
- Also under Central Services, the pension line shows an increase of 15.3%. BOF Member Syme indicated he understood that some grant money may no longer be available. Mr. Paquette suggested that figure had been provided by the Town; Acting Treasurer Carolus recalled that the Town made adjustments due to the performance rate of investments.
- Medical and Dental Insurance is down approximately 10%; what constitutes that decrease? Mr. Paquette indicated those figures were also provided by the Town.
- Central Services shows a line item for \$69,500 for building repairs; what repairs are anticipated? Dr. Kane noted the money had originally been allocated to the nurses' suite in the Middle School, and was moved to Central Services. The BOE is considering if that money will be used for another capital expense or if it can

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use that money for Middle School sports or perhaps to bring back part of the music program.

- Magnet School tuition, what's the number of students attending? Dr. Kane indicated she didn't have that figure available tonight but will get the information for him. BOF Member Richards questioned if the tuition had been increased? Dr. Kane indicated the tuition is increased annually. Mr. Paquette reported the number of students who attend Magnet Schools is 143.
- Under Curriculum Instruction, is that the salary for the Assistant Supervisor? Mr. Paquette suggested contract negotiations are still going on, and because of the proposed reconfiguration of senior staff the figure currently reflected is the current amount. BOF Member Syme noted that with student enrollment dropping, he questioned if we are getting too top-heavy with positions that may not be sustainable? Dr. Kane reported that 43% of the students are enrolled in the free and reduced lunch program; also 1 in 4 students are diagnosed with mental health issues. She suggested the need in the district and the community is incredible. BOF Chairman Corso questioned what are the senior staff positions, and how will that change? Dr. Kane suggested that after she leaves Dr. DeBarge will take over as Supervisor, the Assistant Supervisor position will stay, the special education director will not be replaced, but they anticipate adding a curriculum director; there will still be 3 people comprising senior staff. BOF Member Smith noted the proposed change in the State support of the free and reduced lunch program to the Husky program; he questioned the number of students enrolled? Dr. Kane reported 43% of the students are currently in the free and reduced lunch program; citing possible privacy issues she indicated she'll research the number and provide it if possible.
- Line item 112 on page 3 – technology salaries - he noted the line represents a 5.3% increase; are additions to staff anticipated? Mr. Paquette noted contract negotiations are still going on; that percentage also includes the step increases and a cost of living increase. Dr. Kane noted there are no increases in the number of people represented by that line item.
- In the prior year there was an increase in the technology supply line, which covers the three schools; he understood there would be no grant money to cover that cost this year? Mr. Paquette clarified that over \$700,000 in grant money may no longer be available. In order to provide a level service the cost would have to come from the local appropriation. BOF Chairman Corso also noted that as with the previous year a lot of the end of year spending includes tech supplies.
- In the Middle School and the Broad Brook School there are positions for librarians and library aides; he suggested the salaries seem a little high. Dr. Kane reported the librarians are now part of the teachers' contract and are included in step increases; the library aide is also a contractual position.
- The Middle School custodial position reflects a 19.3% increase; please explain. Dr. Kane indicated that the square footage in the Broad Brook School has been increased by the addition of the modular classrooms, and they were under-staffed

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in the Middle School. This increase reflects a split in the Broad Brook and Middle School costs.

- The cost for tutors for special education – line 116 on page 7 – is increased by 18%. Dr. Kane noted that special education is mandated by the State. They have created in-house programs in the past associated with special education services rather than hire consultants. Dr. Kane also noted that the OT/PT services represent positions for an occupational therapist and a physical therapist.
- A \$724,459 reduction in grants is anticipated, which is a 32% reduction; are those estimated or real figures? Mr. Paquette indicated that is a real figure, but the district still doesn't know the status of the Alliance Grant so the Alliance Grant money hasn't been factored in. BOF Member Syme questioned what amount of revenue would be received if the Alliance Grant does come in? Dr. Kane indicated she expected East Windsor's allocation would be a reduction to under \$300,000.

LET THE RECORD SHOW Selectman Bowsza arrived at 7:30 p.m.

- What happens if the Governor's proposal that the towns share a portion of the cost of teachers' retirement funding becomes a reality? What are the plans for that? Dr. Kane indicated the BOE would return to the BOF to discuss that issue.
- Under the Governor's proposal the ECS (Education Cost Sharing) Grant, which was \$546,000, may be replaced; is that reduction considered in this budget request? The BOE concurred that they have given their best numbers. Chairman Corso noted that in the past the ECS Grant money was added to the revenue side of the budget, while under the current State proposal that money might go directly to the schools, which makes it difficult to formulate this budget.
- Under the line for transportation for Vo Ag students BOF Member Syme understands there are students who have applied to and have been accepted to Suffield High school. BOF Member Syme understood that this district would be providing transportation for their attendance; he questioned why we are providing transportation to another school for classes currently provided elsewhere? Dr. Kane suggested there is no additional cost for that transportation as the district runs a van that does "designer/odd ball runs". Next year two students currently in the Vo Ag program will be graduating so they can pick up the run to Suffield at no additional cost. BOF Chairman Corso noted that the entire transportation section shows an approximate \$100,000 increase. Dr. Kane reported the contract for transportation goes up yearly; next year is the final year in the contract. Also, if there were additional runs for special education transportation that would be reflected in that line. BOF Chairman Corso questioned that students go to the Rockville Vo Ag school now; is there a request to go to another Vo Ag school? Dr. Kane reported a district is under no obligation to go to more than one Vo Ag school; she's been approached by students that would like to attend another school. Dr. Kane suggested there is no cost impact; other districts do that. Transportation to Vo Ag schools is a mandate. BOF Member Herms questioned

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the number of students participating in the Vo Ag program? Dr. Kane reported there are 2 students.

BOF Member Richards cited the slight - .74% - increase in the Grand List, he is hearing there will be 2.9 million in State reductions, East Windsor residents have a median income of approximately \$33,000 to \$35,000, and revenue is down and grant money may be lost from the State; what happens if the BOE receives a zero increase? BOE Chairman Simonelli reported they would cut more important stuff from the budget. BOF Member Richards cited concern regarding what could be collected in taxes; he questioned if we would be looking at teacher layoffs? He questioned what that figure might be? Mr. Paquette reported a figure of \$998,053. Dr. Kane indicated they try hard not to upset staff regarding potential job loss; the reality is that they must let people know by a date certain if they will be laid off.

BOF member Herms raised the following questions:

- What's the status of pre-school programs? Dr. Kane reported that currently they provide an integrated preschool program for 3 and 4 year old children; some of those children may have special education needs. They also have a lottery for general education for 3 and 4 year olds; they draw names out of a hat. They currently run a.m. and p.m. half day sessions although some special education students may attend for a full day to meet their level of need. They would like to add a universal preschool program for 3 and 4 year olds. When the State was offering a preschool grant program but don't have space for them. They looked into using space in the high school but the cost to retrofit the bathrooms to accommodate the small children was cost prohibitive.
- Where is the district at regarding summer school? Dr. Kane suggested that in the past they have not been able to offer a general level summer school program. They are mandated to provide a summer school for special education, and have been able to offer what they call a recovery program for students in the high school to keep them on track for graduation.
- What about the music program in the Middle School and the High school; is it a full range program or has it been cut back? Dr. Kane indicated they are offering a full range program but it has been cut back. They feel they can correct that situation with part - time vocal and general music staff positions.
- Is a sports program being offered in the High School but not in the Middle School? Dr. Kane replied that was correct. BOF Chairman Corso questioned the cost of a Middle School sports program? Dr. Kane felt it could be provided for approximately \$69,000; they would like to start with basketball and then move on to a full array of sports.
- Is a language program being offered in the Middle School? Dr. Kane suggested they offer Spanish in the Middle School; they have a teacher in the High School who is multi-lingual who teaches 6 or 7 languages. BOF Member Herms suggested she didn't feel any of these programs are extra in any way; all these programs would help the students.

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BOF member Smith raised the following questions:

- What's the per student cost this year? Mr. Paquette suggested the figure provided by the State for FY 2016 is \$18,604/student. Dr. Kane submitted a per student cost comparison document to the Board members.
- Where does that put us in the expenditure range? Mr. Paquette suggested East Windsor is at 37%.
- Where do we range regarding the State standing; are we still in the bottom 40%? Dr. Kane suggested it's in the bottom 30% range.
- What's the correlation regarding per student cost vs. performance? Dr. Kane suggested that regarding the per student cost the money you qualify for from the State is added into the per pupil expenditure. If you have a high free and reduced lunch program— 43% of East Windsor students qualify - that money is added to the per student cost. Also, 18% of the student population have special education needs; the money associated with that will increase the per pupil expenditure. Ellington is a much wealthier community so they have different variables associated with their per pupil cost. The \$18,604 per pupil cost for East Windsor for 2016 is above average for a needier population. There has been a modest increase in the scores; they've put a computer in every kid's hands when the parents might not be able to provide them.
- Regarding the 2016 – 2017 scores for literacy, none of the grades scored above 70% which is what most schools consider for passing. Dr. Kane suggested it's considered a solid working curriculum if 80% of the students are score proficient. BOF Member Smith questioned the percentage of seniors who go on to college? BOF Member Smith indicated he knows the district is working hard with the money; are we going up or are we still in the bottom 30% regarding performance? Mr. Paquette indicated that in 2015 61.25% of graduating seniors went on to a 2 or 4 year program. Discussion followed regarding how the scores are rated, the outside factors effecting student performance, and the need to provide family support services to be able to provide educational services for the whole child.

BOE Chairman Corso queried the Board for additional questions; no one requested to speak.

Dr. Kane noted that at some time both boards will need to meet to discuss how to handle the new students social services bureau which will be initiated at the Middle School level.

4. Budget Workshop/b. Police Department/Emergency Management/Police Commission:

Chief Edward DeMarco, and Deputy Chief Roger Hart joined the Board.

Police Department - #510200:

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BOF Member Syme questioned that the capital purchases line had been requested at \$11,414 but has been reduced to \$5,000. It was noted that change was made by the Board of Selectmen (BOS). BOF Member Syme also noted the overtime line reflects an \$11,300 increase; is that enough? Chief DeMarco noted the overtime line is classically under-funded, and is the reason they make the transfers at the end of the fiscal year. Deputy Chief Hart noted the overtime line historically runs between 11 and 13%; this request represents 11.8%. It's a good place to start; so much of the overtime is a variable situation.

BOF Member Herms noted the part-time clerical figure is higher at \$25,800. Deputy Chief Hart reported they had a full time person who asked to be moved to the supervisors union and was allowed to because they were performing supervisory duties.

BOF Member Smith noted an increase in the uniform line. Chief DeMarco indicated it's a contracted number; the money wasn't spent last year but was needed in the Spring. Deputy Chief Hart suggested the \$50,572 was spent on uniforms in 2015.

BOF Member Richards noted capital purchases was requested at \$11,414, but was reduced by \$6400. Chief DeMarco explained that the \$11,414 was the original request; that was reduced to \$5,000 by the Board of Selectmen. They can do a minimum with that amount.

BOF Member Smith questioned the status of the North Central Narcotics Task Force? Chief DeMarco reported the department is moving into the State Task Force, for which they now receive a monthly stipend. BOF Member Smith questioned with the opioid addiction on the rise is East Windsor seeing an increase in the number of calls? Chief DeMarco noted increases are on the rise nationally; the opioid problem isn't unique to East Windsor. The programming to address the problem costs money. Discussion continued regarding the opioid program throughout the state vs. the programming availability on the town levels.

Emergency Management - #510300:

Selectman Bowsza reported the BOS took out the request for the stipend increase. Chief DeMarco recalled that the BOS took it out last year and the BOF added something back in. This job is different than when he began management 5 years ago; it was intended to be a 1 or 2 year commitment but it's been 5 years already. That stipend pays 5 people; a secretary receives \$750, he and Deputy Chief Hart split the remainder 50/50. Other towns allocate \$30,000 to \$35,000 towards the stipend. Chief DeMarco cited the training and educational requirements associated with the position; the manual must be revamped frequently. Staff must be at the emergency center 24/7 during a disaster. BOF Chairman Corso noted an increase in equipment maintenance. Deputy Chief Hart reported they have initiated service contracts on the generators but are now having

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problems as the generators are 15 years old. They have also requested an increase in the number of generators.

Communications - #510400:

Deputy Chief Hart reported Marcus Communications is the current vendor; the requested increase is minimal. Dispatch – Tolland is a per capita cost. The equipment includes microphones for patrol cars.

Chairman Corso queried the Board for comments; no one raised any additional questions.

MOTION: To RECESS the BOF Budget Workshop for 5 minutes.

Richards moved/Syme seconded/VOTE: In Favor: Unanimous

The Board RECESSED at 8:55 p.m.

MOTION: To RECONVENE the BOF Budget Workshop at 9:00 p.m.

Richards moved/Syme seconded/VOTE: In Favor: Unanimous

4. Budget Workshop/c. Public Works/Town Property/Roads/Sanitation/Information Technology:

Len Norton, Director and Joe Sauerhoefer, Operations Manager, joined the Board.

Mr. Norton reported he is responsible for 5 department budgets. After cuts made by the Board of Selectmen (BOS) the total increase for all 5 departments is \$41,781, or 1.24%. Mr. Norton reported they had attempted to be conservative regarding their budget requests because they knew the difficulties of budget constraints.

Town Property - #610200:

BOF Member Richards questioned that the building repair/maintenance line includes all Town properties, such as the annex, Town Hall, etc? Mr. Sauerhoefer indicated all Town buildings are included under repairs and maintenance. BOF Member Richards questioned that no one has included Scout Hall which would have included a \$10,000 increase for the doors recently replaced? Mr. Sauerhoefer reported that if the doors had been included they would have been paid for, and if additional funding was necessary they would have returned to the BOF. Discussion followed regarding the process for maintenance at Scout Hall. Selectman Bowsza noted Scout Hall representatives didn't submit anything during the budget cycle. BOF Member Richards questioned if Scout Hall repairs are included in this budget request; Mr. Sauerhoefer replied negatively. Mr.

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Norton noted they are not responsible for the schools either. Discussion continued regarding maintenance programs vs. the difficulty responding to unplanned events.

BOF Member Syme noted the line item water/fire hydrants; he questioned if that line included fire hydrants located within the Warehouse Point Fire District? Mr. Norton noted this is a new issue because the WPF District has become their own district; Mr. Sauerhoefer suggested Connecticut Water Company charges a per hydrant fee for protection and service. Discussion began regarding who owns the fire hydrants, what's the number of hydrants located within the Broad Brook and the Warehouse Point areas respectively, and what the charge is based on. Selectman Bowsza clarified that under the Memo of Understanding (MOU) between the Town and the WPF District the issue of the fire hydrants was omitted because of the timing of the MOU. Connecticut Water Company sends a bill to the Town. Discussion continued regarding this issue.

Information Technology – 910400:

BOF Chairman Corso noted the Information Technology budget is new this year. Mr. Norton noted that Cox Cable, which had previously been included in the Town maintenance budget, has been moved to the IT budget. BOF Member Smith questioned the status of Nutmeg Network? Mr. Norton reported they won't give a price quote without coming out to demonstrate their products. Mr. Sauerhoefer noted this budget request also includes additional software.

Road Improvements - 610300:

BOF Member Syme agreed the Town needs to fund the salt and sand request. Mr. Sauerhoefer noted the Town had no sand left going into this Winter when usually some material is left over from the previous year. BOF Member Syme questioned that the BOS increased the request? Mr. Norton noted the original request was for \$450,000; First Selectman Maynard reduced that amount to \$304,000; the BOS then returned the budget request to \$450,000.

Sanitation - #910500:

BOF Member Herms questioned that if the Town doesn't do the hazardous waste collection every year is there a way to even out the cost? Mr. Norton indicated they are working hard to keep the cost to \$15,000; he explained the preparation process – which includes creation and submission of a stormwater management plan to DEEP. Mr. Norton suggested the hazardous waste collection could easily cost \$15,000 per year. Mr. Sauerhoefer also noted that to convert the every other year cost to an annual cost would require the funding to come through the CNR Fund as the department budget lines go to zero every year.

Public Works - #610100:

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The Board had no questions regarding this department budget.

5. Board Member Comments:

BOF Chairman Corso queried the Board for comments.

Mrs. Broder: no comments.

Mr. Richards: He's concerned with what's coming from the State and what do we do – we have public safety, infrastructure, then education – Mr. Richards isn't optimistic this year.

Mrs. Pippin: She heard good presentations tonight but had no specific comments at this time.

Mr. Syme: With regard to Public Works his only question is can we reduce the number of hydrants; they did a good job with minor increases. The Police Department – money was already taken away from capital purchases; maybe they can reduce education and dues a bit to compensate. The Board of Education budget is high. He supports them but doesn't know if we can give them everything, maybe a 3 or 4% increase with the understanding that if we have to contribute to teachers' retirements that responsibility would be on them.

Mrs. Herms: She would like to give the Town the opportunity to support what's needed in the community; she would like to give the departments the chance to get funded as the need.

Mr. Smith: He questioned that under Activities, Fees, and Associations, there is no funding for the Youth Center and the Broad Brook Library but there is \$20,000 for the Warehouse Point Fire District? Selectman Bowsza clarified that the First Selectmen's proposed budget didn't include funding for the Youth Center and the Broad Brook Library; the Board of Selectmen returned minimal funding for both organizations. With regard to the Warehouse Point Fire District the original request under the First Selectmen's proposed budget was for \$20,000; the Board of Selectmen reduced the funding to zero. Discussion followed regarding presentation of the budget worksheet, which has been the manner of presentation for several previous years. Mr. Smith felt there are many numbers that need to be reworked.

Chairman Corso: Agreed with Mr. Smith; she cited the timing of the State's advisement to towns may require an additional workshop meeting for the BOF. Selectman Bowsza noted the Legislative Finance Committee, which includes aid to the towns, is meeting on the 27th and 28th. Chairman Corso felt the Public Works Department, with a proposed 1.24% increase, did a good job with their 5 departments. She felt more discussion will occur with the Police Department and the Board of Education; she is hopeful for cooperation.

Chairman Corso also noted the Board will begin all workshops - March 27th, March 29th, and April 3rd - at 6:00 p.m.

6. Adjournment:

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MOTION: To ADJOURN at 10:00 p.m.

Syme moved/Herms seconded/VOTE: In Favor: Unanimous

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