

**Board of Selectmen  
Board of Education  
Town of East Windsor  
11 Rye Street  
East Windsor, CT**

**MINUTES OF PUBLIC HEARING,  
January 18, 2012 at 6:30 p.m.**

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

**Board of Selectmen**

Members Present: Denise Menard, Alan Baker, Dale Nelson, Richard Pippin, Jr., and James C. Richards  
Members Absent: None

**Board of Education**

Members Present: Chris Mickey, George Michna, Cathy Simonelli, Bob Maynard, Kathy Bilodeau, Nichole DeSousa, Lynn Stanley and William Schultz  
Members Absent: None

Others: Theresa M. Kane, Catherine Cabral, Linda Giuliano, Joseph Pellegrini, Jason Bowsza, Chief DeMarco, Margaret Hoffman, Lois Noble, Kathleen Pippin, Charles Riggott, Paulette Broder, Jerilyn Corso, Richard Sullivan, and a few others (a total of approximately 19 people)  
Press: L. Smith (Patch.com); C. Gauffman (Journal Inquirer)

First Selectwoman Denise Menard called the Public Hearing to Order at 6:33 p.m., in the East Windsor Town Hall.

Ms. Menard thanked all who were in attendance. She indicated this is a Joint Public Hearing of the Board of Selectmen and Board of Education for public input regarding the upcoming budget. She indicated copies of the current budget are available on the conference table for everyone. She indicated if anyone would like to speak, could do so by signing their name and address on the pad and those people would be called up in the order of which they signed the sheet.

Ms. Menard introduced Dr. Theresa M. Kane, Superintendent of Schools and asked if she had an introduction. Dr. Kane thanked everyone for attending the hearing and this being her first budget process, she will review the documents given this evening and she will set goals in the district and prioritize a spending plan. Any thoughts the public can share will be very helpful.

Ms. Menard opened the floor for public comment.

Mr. Joseph Pellegrini, 114 Rye Street, Broad Brook, addressed the Boards. He is a member of the Board of Finance and he has three children. He would ask that the Board of Education and Board of Selectmen move forward and work together. There are a few new faces in the group for this budget process and he hopes this will bring new ideas to try different things. He has spoken to First Selectwoman Denise Menard in an attempt to find new avenues for this budget process He has three children and he wants to be a proud that they attend East Windsor Public Schools.

Ms. Menard commented that she, Dr. Kane and a few new Board Members have briefly discussed new ideas and maybe it will reflect a step in the right direction. Ms. Menard asked if anyone had any ideas or suggestions, to please bring them forward.

Mr. Richard Sullivan, 37 Rye Street, Broad Brook, addressed the Boards. He remarked about basic education of reading and mathematics for the children instead of a fancy curriculum. In order to learn how to read, children must read. All of the different choices which are given to the children should be taken away and the two main basic subjects should be focused on.

Ms. Lois Noble, 181 Wells Road, addressed the Boards. She wanted to know what type of outreach the district does to other public and private schools from the surrounding towns that it can improve the district. She gave examples of Suffield Public Schools and Suffield Academy.

Ms. Menard reminded everyone that this is a public hearing and the Boards are just hear to listen and not have a debate, but a little back and forth will be okay.

Dr. Kane commented that she has visited two districts where their strategies have been successful. Organizational goals, instructional focus by teachers improve performance. She is fortunate to have a talented staff to draw ideas. She also wanted to address a comment about reading, and she couldn't agree more. The best gift we are able to give is being able to read at grade level along with mathematics. Making children good citizens is all part of the learning process and if they cannot do the basics, we are not doing our job.

Ms. Lois Noble asked what "school messenger" is.

Dr. Kane responded that it is a software product for communication with parents and students. It can communicate through text, email, and phone. The district has had the software and presently all the data is being entered into the system. It is a work in progress. It was used during the recent storms and there was a glitch and only home phone numbers were reached.

Ms. Lois Noble commented about the Board of Education website during those recent storms were not updated and she inquired if they can be accessed remotely so websites

can be updated periodically, especially during an emergency so parents and/or students can be kept updated via internet.

Dr. Kane responded that she has had concerns about the website and currently the district is working on that as well. The revamped version should be available at the end of January or beginning of February. She talked about the problems the server had during the storm and the many technology difficulties the district has been experiencing. She agrees that it is frustrating, but steps are being taken to rectify the situation.

Ms. Menard asked if anyone else would like to speak.

Dr. Kane wanted to make everyone aware that soon, every household a newsletter will be going out from the district. It will contact a self-addressed, stamped envelope so the district can hear from the public and have an open communication with the Board of Education. She is planning to invite the community to a forum to discuss strategic planning for the district and the future of East Windsor Public Schools. She hopes the community will participate.

Ms. Lois Noble inquired about language studies in the public schools and introducing a foreign language earlier since it has been suggested the earlier a foreign language is introduced the better for the child. She also wanted to know if they had plans to expand foreign language and offer different courses, such as Latin.

Dr. Kane responded that it is something that she would like to entertain, but presently the district has to focus on getting the children in third grade to be able to read and do math at grade level or above. She indicated she agrees with Ms. Noble's comment and has looked into foreign language offerings at the middle school level, and Spanish has been placed in the rotation. However, presently she is recommending the focus be on the basics.

Jerilyn Corso, 23 Lindsay Lane, addressed the Boards. Ms. Corso indicated she did not have a question regarding the budget, but she did have a question about what happens to the children who excel at subjects, what kind of opportunities are given to them to grow and advance further.

Dr. Kane indicated that children who excel in subjects are engaged in tiered instruction and students, who are not struggling and are advance, do exist. Those children are given stimulating materials to keep them advancing.

Mr. Adam Mehan, 6 Cobblestone Drive, addressed the Boards. He spoke about the revenue from the State of Connecticut and the funding of the ECS grants and what changes are expected.

Ms. Menard indicated that she has attended meetings with members of the Board of Finance, Board of Education, and the Treasurer regarding the ECS grants and changes which may or may not happen. She has heard that there will be no changes in the grant

formula; however, the formula is very complex. There should be a fair amount of funding.

Mr. Chris Mickey, Chairman of the Board of Education indicated that the State of Connecticut Department of Education indicated he doesn't believe they will be tweaking the formula this year and anticipates funding. Cities will receive more than smaller towns, will little changes but nothing traumatic.

Mr. Jason Bowsza, Chairman of the Board of Finance indicted that the surplus of revenue the State anticipated is not as good as once thought and the next few months, decisions will be made to meet budgets. The income tax revenues were lower than expected.

Ms. Catherine Cabral, Treasurer, indicated that the formula is to be the same for the two years, she is not sure what will happen after this budget season and the changes to the ECS grants which could happen and affect it will have on future funding.

Mr. Bowsza indicated that if the State's revenue is less, the State will probably look at the MBR law and maybe tweak it as well. If that is the case, this will affect municipal taxes increasing because of less funding from the State.

A brief discussion was held among Mr. Pellegrini, Mr. Richards, Mr. Sullivan and Dr. Kane regarding cost per student and the impact scores have on funding.

Mr. Brian Turley, 4 Lindsay Lane inquired if the amount of students attending magnet schools affect the MBR?

Dr. Kane referred the question to the business manager, Linda Guiliano, who indicated the Town of East Windsor has the highest amount of the deduction it can take. She did not know the number exactly, but told Mr. Turley she could get that number for him.

Mr. Turley inquired as to the cause of so many children going to magnet school, and what the cost of same.

Mr. William Schultz, Board of Education Member, indicated the credit taken for MBR is the maximum of \$98,000. The district has approximately 70 children attending magnet schools at approximately \$3,000 per student. He indicated the numbers he was giving were all ballpark figures.

Mr. Turley inquired if those figures included private schools?

Dr. Kane indicated the numbers are growing every year and the projections for enrollment are lower than a few years ago.

Ms. Marie DeSousa, 10 Rice Road, addressed the Board. She indicated there are only so many spots for students to get into the magnet schools and she believes there is a waiting list.

Dr. Kane acknowledged there are a lot of options for magnet schools.

Ms. Menard thanked all for coming to the hearing and the hearing ended at 7:09 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Denise M. Piotrowicz  
Recording Secretary