

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

MINUTES OF PUBLIC HEARING

Wednesday, May 23, 2012 at 7:00 p.m.

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

Members Present: Jason Bowsza, Joseph Pellegrini, Danelle E. Godeck, Jerilyn Corso, and Kathleen Pippin
Members Absent: Marie DeSousa
Alternates Present: Paulette Broder and Sharon Tripp
Alternate Absent: None
Others: Catherine Cabral, Denise Menard, Alan Baker, Dale Nelson, Richard Pippin, James Richards, Chris Mickey, Teresa Kane, Cathy Simonelli, Carol Madore, Kim Lord, Linda Guilliano, William Dove, Jack Mannette, Bob Lyke, Tom Muska, Sharon Muska, and others
Press: Larry Smith (Patch.com)

I. Call to Order

Chairman Jason Bowsza called the Public Hearing to Order at 7:04 p.m., in the East Windsor High School Cafeteria.

Chairman Jason Bowsza thanked everyone for attending the Public Hearing and reminded anyone who would like to address the Board, a sign-up sheet was on the conference table and it was asked to write their name and address and limit their comments to three minutes.

II. Public Input

Mr. William Dove, 109 Melrose Road, addressed the Board. As a former member of the Board of Finance, he understands that the Board of Finance has been working on the budget since January and at this point, the Board is probably tired about talking about the budget. Most likely, the Board has had 15 to 20 meetings discussing the budget and the referendum has failed twice and there is only one more referendum before the budget reverts to a 2% increase. He is suggesting starting line by line, item by item and reviewing each and every department so cuts can be made. He indicated that the town employees are compensated very well and receive very good medical benefits. He is suggesting that the employees should start paying more into their medical benefits. He indicated a family plan for medical benefits could cost the

Town of East Windsor \$18,000 to \$20,000 per employee. He understands that the medical benefits are given to the employees through the negotiated contracts; however, the First Selectwoman earns the big bucks and she should be able to negotiate with the bargaining units on this issue.

Mr. Jack Mannette, 13 Old Ellington Road, addressed the Board. He indicated that the taxpayers have spoken two times at the past two referendums indicating 2% or less increase to the budget. The public is looking at the Board of Finance to make this happen. The taxpayers will force this to happen. Cut the increase in spending and think carefully what will happen if the default 2% goes into affect. He is suggesting not touching the Town Government portion of the budget and the Board of Education portion of the budget needs to be cut. Lastly, he remarked about Ms. Menard misquoted about the information of a 7% increase in salaries. He has seen the flyer that she is referring to and none of those flyers say anything about a 7% or 8% increase in annual salaries and benefits.

Mr. Bob Lyke, Rye Street, addressed the Board. He indicated he can relate to preparing budgets and the countless hours which it requires. The defeated budget proposals should not be taken personally. He is retired and is on a very low, fixed income and is not employed. He can relate to the Board of Finance, Board of Selectmen and Board of Education members because they are volunteers and he has been a volunteer for years for the town, working at the Senior Center as a yoga instructor and video taping the various town meetings. The Town needs to be active in attracting new businesses to the town. He indicated the he has recently read that the Board of Education is creating a new position which will be compensated approximately \$60,000 per year and a position at the middle school will be eliminated which will be an even swap. However, the position at the middle school which is being eliminated is only compensated \$37,000. This decision was done in private meetings regarding personnel. He believes that the Board of Finance should cut the budget to make the increase 1.87%.

Mr. Tom Muska, 216 East Road, addressed the Board. He wanted to continue from the comments he made from the last meeting which he indicated that government employees live in a bubble. He read from an article from the New York Times regarding tax increases. He suggested that the Board crunch the numbers of the Board of Education and see where the cuts can be made. The public employees are cannot be protected and the costs of increased salaries and pensions cannot be sustained.

Ms. Denise Menard, First Selectwoman, 73 Miller Road, addressed the Board. She was speaking this evening as a citizen of the Town of East Windsor. She commented that she is driving a ten year old car and there have been a number of years that she has not received an increase in her salary. As the First Selectwoman, she indicated that the Town Government side of the budget is requesting an increase of less than one percent; the public safety department is requesting an increase of 1.9%. The Insurance/Benefits category everyone is talking about with a 40%

increase is not for employee health insurance but for the heart and hypertension benefits which the Town is responsible for paying those costs pursuant to the CIRMA (the Town's insurance carrier). She explained heart and hypertension compensation pertains to public safety employees. This is the law. The other benefits which are listed in this category are liability, automobile, property and unemployment. The unemployment benefits are being increased due to the increase in claims against the Town. She reiterated, this is not for health insurance benefits. She has been very aggressive in keeping the health insurance benefits costs low. She is asking the Board of Finance not to make any cuts against the Town Government side of the budget; the budget is already at bare bones. She understands that the education of the youth of the Town of East Windsor is very important.

No one else volunteered to speak.

III. Adjournment

The public hearing was closed at 7:20 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Denise M. Piotrowicz
Recording Secretary