

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

**MINUTES OF SPECIAL MEETING – BUDGET WORKSHOP
March 5, 2011 at 9:30 a.m.**

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

Members Present: Denise Menard, John L. Burnham, Richard P. Pippin, Jr., and
Gilbert Hayes
Members Absent: Mark Simmons (Entered at 10:20 a.m.)
Others: Kathleen Pippin and Catherine Cabral
Press: None

I. Call to Order

First Selectwoman Denise Menard called the Special Meeting to Order at 10:08 a.m., in the East Windsor Town Hall.

II. Attendance

Denise Menard, First Selectwoman
Mark Simmons, Deputy Selectman
John L. Burnham, Selectman
Gilbert Hayes, Selectman
Richard P. Pippin, Jr., Selectman

III. Budget Discussions

Ms. Catherine Cabral gave to all Board Members two reports entitled, “Budget Report Builder Town of East Windsor 2009-2010 as of March 4, 2011” and “Budget Report Builder Town of East Windsor 2010-2011 as of March 4, 2011 Preliminary” to use as the group discusses the budget. She explained what each column represented. She did indicate the salary contractual obligations were included. The preliminary for fiscal year 2010-2011 budget building report is requested nothing is recommended until the budget is approved by the voters. The requested column could be considered as the wish list of each department. On the last page of each report, Ms. Cabral has given rough figures in pencil to show a comparison of the requested budget and the current working budget. While explaining the reports and figures, Mr. Burnham suggested that the two reports be referred to No. 1 (2009-2010) and No. 2 (2010-2011). It was agreed. Ms. Cabral brought to the Board Member’s attention in comparing the two, the difference is \$164,892.15; however, that figure does not include budgets of Capital Improvement Projects or Board of Education. It also does not include debt figures.

Ms. Menard explained there is a projected increase of 12% for health insurance benefits, however, that increase is not set in stone. She is still in negotiations with the insurance company along with speaking to the unions regarding any type of concessions regarding the payment of health insurance premiums. She indicated there has been talk about the State offering to big city unions, a plan regarding prescriptions at a lower cost. The savings could be approximately \$30,000.

In an overview of the proposed budget, discussion began regarding the Capital Improvement Projects. The reports given to the Board Members did not include a budget for that department. A meeting is to be scheduled for that Committee to discuss their proposal in the near future. Mr. Pippin suggested funding that department the same as last year. Ms. Cabral indicated that would be approximately \$437,000. Ms. Menard commented that the Capital Improvement Project requests will most likely be very conservative.

Mr. Mark Simmons entered the meeting at 10:20 a.m. He was given all the reports and a brief explanation of same.

A causal discussion was held regarding the fire departments and their requests. One request in particular that was focused on was the replacement of the parking lot/driveway of the Warehouse Point Fire Department. A question arose if the town owns the building the fire department is housed. Suggestions of having the Treasurer's Office process all the invoices for the fire departments to keep a handle on the expenses. Ms. Cabral commented that some surrounding towns process all invoices for fire departments. She also indicated that fire departments revenues from carnivals and other events have significantly decreased over the years. Ms. Menard reminded everyone that the fire departments do provide a volunteer service to the town. In regards to the request of the replacement of the driveway, she would like to see written bids for the project instead of an estimate given. Mr. Pippin suggested maybe piggy-backing the driveway project with another town project in order to get the town rate for the work performed.

Ms. Menard indicated she would like to start the budget discussion by going through each and every request, line by line. She would like everyone to use the No. 2 report which is entitled "Budget Report Builder Town of East Windsor 2010-2011 as of March 4, 2011 Preliminary". The first department listed is Selectmen (1010). She indicated the increases in this department are contractual and the increase is approximately \$2,600. Ms. Menard indicated some of the increases are from the clerical union, however, she and Becky from her office are not included, and those salaries have no increase.

A short discussion began regarding the Board of Education proposed budget and how the Board of Finance will be receptive to any of the proposals and how the voters will be react during the referendums.

Ms. Menard asked if the Board was in agreement to the Selectmen's proposed budget. It was suggested putting a nominal amount into the lines to pay for stipends for the Board of Selectmen and Deputy Selectmen just to keep the lines open. The discussion again turned into talking about the salary increases and the contractual obligations and the transfers which need to be done in the current working budget to meet those obligations. Those transfers were requested in July; however, they were not acted upon. The transfers have been requested again and approved by the Board of Selectmen and are now waiting for approval from the Board of Finance. Ms. Cabral explained the monies for those transfers are available through the Pension Account due to a smoothing process of the Pension Account. Ms. Menard indicated the smoothing of the Pension Account is a one time process. Due to contracts, the pension accounts cannot be changed until 2015. Ms. Cabral explained OPEB (Other Post Employment Benefits) and the accounting changes of GASPE. Within that discussion, conversations of pension plans and during union contract negotiations of revamping how the pension plans are funded.

The next department discussed was Town Counsel and Legal (1015). Ms. Menard commented she has spoken to Josh to discuss pending legal matters. She has been informed that many major law suits have been settled recently and therefore, it is felt the budget can be decreased to approximately \$150,000. She realizes two union contracts are coming up for negotiations, but the town has a human resources person which can handle the majority of the work at a cheaper rate than the town attorney.

The Town Auditor (1020) line was discussed next. Ms. Cabral indicated the line is being requested at the same amount as last year. She is attempting to get a better bid from different firms, but she is basing her estimate from what was quoted to her from BlumShapiro. The total request is approximately \$61,000. The Treasurer (1025) the next department discussed. Ms. Cabral indicated that her request is less than 1%. It was agreed the figures were good.

It was indicated the Town Clerk (1030) line was increased slightly approximately 1.4% due to the contractual salary obligations. The conversation which took place revolved around the insurance benefits, OPEB, and pensions, and thoughts of how the town could save money in that area. Ms. Cabral also explained to everyone how the contingency account is used. She also explained the fund balance policy and the requirements of GASPE for the fund balance. The general rule is to have two months of expenditures in that account and how that fund balance affects the town's bond rating.

The Assessor (1035) line was discussed. Ms. Cabral gave a sheet to everyone which explained the ARRA funds and how these funds affect the budget. Ms. Menard also gave a brief explanation of the ARRA grants and how that revenue is used and accounted for by the Board of Education. She indicated the ARRA grants were only for last year and it is anticipated those grants are going to be decreased substantially. However, the governor is proposing to fully fund those grants. Ms. Cabral discussed

that all of the money was not used by the Board of Education last year and the Board of Education gave back the money to the town for the fund balance. The discussion continued about the emergency snow removal and the NASEC requirements and the payment of those expenses.

Board Recessed at 11:50 p.m.

Board Reconvened at 11:58 p.m.

After the break, Ms. Cabral wanted to review where the Board left off speaking about the Assessors line. It is showing an increase due to the salary increases and due to the reevaluation expenses. Ms. Menard indicated she would speak to Ms. Madore regarding her requested budget and get clarification of certain increases for the Board.

Tax Collector (1040) line was discussed next. Mr. Pippin indicated the tax collector did justify her increases during her presentation. No changes made. The Assessment Appeals Board (1045) department was the next discussed. Questions arose about the recording secretary fees, advertising, and postage.

The next line discussed was Registrars (1050). There is a big increase in the referendum line. The registrar is budgeting for three referendums. There were discussions of combining the polling places for the referendums only to save money, but it was mentioned staffing for those referendums would be the same. Mr. Simmons called Ms. Linda Sinsigallo to discuss the increases and to get clarification of same. It was decided to add \$10.00 to open a line for primaries. There were other minor changes within the lines, but it did not affect the bottom line of the requested budget.

Probate Court (1055) line was the next discussed. There is no change and will budgeted the same amount as last year. Pension Fund (1065) line had changes, decreases in the recording line due to the fact the recording secretary is paid by the administrator's fees and a decrease other supplies.

Advertising and Printing (1070) line was discussed. It was indicated there is an increase due to the advertising for the Town Meetings which had to be published due to all the transfers which need to be done. The printing of the annual report was approximately \$3,000 and it was decided that should be accounted for in the Board of Finance budget because that Board is responsible for the printing of that report. A brief discussion was held regarding how this line is used and maybe some of the costs can be absorbed in different departments, such as, the Board of Selectmen.

Town Property (1085) line was discussed briefly along with Building Committee (1086) and the Economic Development Commission (1115). No changes were made.

Zoning Board of Appeals (1120) line was discussed and an increase in the recording secretary was requested to include funding for a full year of meetings at 12 meetings

per year, cost of \$100 per meeting. It was suggested to cut \$200 off that request and put the request to \$1000.

Planning and Zoning Commission (1124) and the Planning (1124) lines were discussed. No changes with Planning and Zoning Commission and there were some decreases in the Planning lines. The Building Department (1125) requested an increase of \$4000 which consisted of vehicle maintenance, salary increases, and professional services. After a conversation, it was decided to cut this budget request by \$2,000, cutting vehicle maintenance to \$500 and professional services to \$2000.00.

A brief discussion regarding the next scheduled budget workshop meeting will be March 9, 2011 at 6:30 p.m.

The meeting ended at 1:03 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Denise M. Piotrowicz
Recording Secretary