

TOWN OF EAST WINDSOR BOARD OF SELECTMEN

BUDGET PRESENTATIONS - WORKSHOP

Thursday, February 8, 2018

7:00 p.m.

Town Hall Meeting Room
11 Rye Street, Broad Brook, CT. 06016

Meeting Minutes

*** *These Minutes are not official until approved at a subsequent meeting****

Board of Selectmen:

Robert Maynard, First Selectman
Steve Dearborn., Deputy First Selectman
Jason Bowsza, Selectman
Andy Hoffman, Selectman
Charles J. Szymanski, Selectman

ATTENDANCE: Board of Selectmen: Robert Maynard, First Selectman; Steve Dearborn, Deputy First Selectman; Selectmen: Andy Hoffman; Charles J. Szymanski.

ABSENT: All Selectmen were present.

PRESENTERS: Town Staff: Assessor: Carol Madore; Director of Community Services: Melissa Maltese; Registrar of Voters: Linda Sinisgallo, Republican Registrar; Angelo Sevarino, Democratic Registrar. Interim Treasurer: Gayle Carolus.

GUESTS: Town Staff: Human Services: Lori Butenas, Jane Simpkins; Parks and Recreation: Samantha Charette/

Press: No one from the Press was present.

TIME AND PLACE OF BUDGET WORKSHOP MEETING:

First Seletman Maynard called the Meeting to Order at 7:00 p.m. in the Town Hall Meeting Room, 11 Rye Street, Broad Brook, CT.

ATTENDANCE: See above.

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PRESENTATIONS/a. 7:00 P.M. – Assessor – 410700, and Board of Assessment Appeals - 810400:

Assessor – 410700

Assessor Carol Madore joined the Board. First Selectman Maynard reported that the FY 2018 – 2019 Budget Request for the Assessor’s Office is \$190,990, which represents a minus 0.35% increase. First Selectman Maynard noted that negotiations are continuing with the Supervisor’s Union the Clerical Union, and the Police and Dispatchers therefore salary increases for FY 2018 – 2019 are not reflected in this budget. This current budget includes an additional \$200,000 to cover the cost of the pending raises.

Mrs. Madore reported that she has decreased Professional Services, which covers the cost of services such as a special mailing which are more cost effectively done by a vendor than taking staff away from customer service, by \$1,000. We’ve also used that for Personal Property audits.

Discussion followed regarding staff responsibilities. Mrs. Madore reported the department currently has 3 full-time employees; herself and two additional full-time employees. A \$10 “place-holder” amount has been shown for the part-time employee overtime line; Interim Treasurer Carolus explained the figure holds the line open if additional overtime is needed. To not fund the line eliminates it from the budget, which would require approval of the Board of Finance (BOF) to reinstate.

Mrs. Madore reported she does charge for copies of records made for the public; she does charge for Notary services but donates that fee to Birth to School as her personal choice.

First Selectman Maynard reported that the State is not reimbursing towns for “senior homeowners credits”. Mrs. Madore explained that the Statutes allow for residents to apply for this credit under certain criteria, her department must process the applications. When residents apply for the homeowners credit they also apply for the Veterans Additional and Disability credits; those credits are still being funded by the State. Mrs. Madore suggested she had planned to present this discussion at the next Selectmen’s Meeting.

Board of Assessment Appeals - 810400:

Regarding the Budget Request for the Board of Assessment Appeals Mrs. Madore reported she’s kept the request level. Funding provides for recording secretarial services; professional services would provide funding for a newspaper publication. Postage is charged through the First Selectmen’s Office.

In response to Selectman Hoffman’s question regarding the number of appeals heard, Mrs. Madore reported that depends on the revaluation. One year they heard 400 appeals; this year has been lighter.

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The Board thanked Mrs. Madore for her informative presentation.

PRESENTATIONS/B. 7:15 p.m. Parks and Recreation – 710200, Human Services - 411700, and Senior Services (Senior Center) - 710100:

Joining the Board was Melissa Maltese, Director of Community Services. A recent reorganization of the Human Services Office, Senior Services Office/Senior Center, and the Parks and Recreation Department has resulted in the combined Community Services Department, now overseen by Mrs. Maltese.

Mrs. Maltese provided a PowerPoint presentation identifying the purpose and work of each department. Also present in the audience were the staff of the Human Services Department, Lori Butenas, Human Services Aide, and Jane Simpkins, Administrative Assistant/Intake Assistant, and Samantha Charette of the Parks and Recreation Department. /

Human Services – 411700.

Mrs. Maltese reported that the first step for a resident is a needs assessment to find out what they need and to explain to them that they need to be part of the process to provide the background information for Human Services to help them. Mrs. Maltese and her staff reviewed the various programs:

- **Energy Assistance/Operation Fuel:** Residents must apply for this program, which is funded through the State and also through the donation elective on people's electric bills. This program is seasonal, ending on March 5th. Many of the clients are Park Hill residents needing assistance with their fuel bills. Bills are paid directly to the vendor through CRT and Operation Fuel.
- **Renters Rebate:** Begins in April; assistance is provided based on qualifications; they must be seniors or disabled. Residents must apply for this program as well; they receive a check annually from the State.
- **Nutrition assistance:** Clients received assistance through the 5 Corner Cupboard, the Mobile Food Share Program which meets at St. Catherine Church parking lot, and Farmer's Market Coupons for seasonal produce. Holiday baskets are available through the 5 Corner Cupboard and the Visiting Nurse Association. 34 students at the Elementary School are enrolled in the Power Pack Program which provides backpacks of food for Elementary School students for the weekend; 34 students are currently enrolled in this program. Nearly 50% of the students in this district participate in the free or reduced lunch program. Mrs. Maltese reported they have partnered with the Hunger Action Team and Food Share to fight hunger. Donations have been received via a Food Share Grant, and also the Walmart Community Grant, and also through the private sector, including companies such as Allied; Geissler's provides food at a discounted price. Discussion followed regarding criteria and credentials for participation.

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- **Farmers Market Coupon Program:** The State cut funding for this program which provided coupons towards the purchase of fresh produce. A local farmer became certified to provide this assistance.
- **Additional Programs:** Back to School provides school supplies, backpacks, and food for students, Holiday Toy Drive, SNAP (Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program), Medicare Savings Program, Mental Health assistance.

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Mrs. Maltese summarized the following accomplishments:

- **Energy Assistance:** 338 applications processed, \$206,505 assistance provided.
- **Operation Fuel:** 54 applications processed, \$21,997 assistance provided.
- **Renters Rebate:** 173 applications processed; \$90,972 assistance provided.
- **Grants:** \$2500 from United Way which goes into the General Assistance line.
- **Farmers Market Coupon Program:** 21 coupons processed.
- **Power Pack Program:** 34 Elementary school students received weekend food backpacks.
- **Back to School Backpacks:** 109 students received backpacks and associated items.
- **Holiday Baskets:** 228 families provided Thanksgiving baskets; 228 families received Christmas baskets.
- **Annual Toy Drive:** 204 children “adopted”, 81 children funded through the East Windsor Police Department through their annual Toy Drive.

Mrs. Maltese reported on the following additional areas:

- **Landlord outreach:** She will be working on a community outreach program for landlords to educate them on treatment of tenants.
- **Change of Script:** She has received a \$5,000 mini-grant and will partner with the Police Department and the Board of Education to educate local doctors, veterinarians, and pharmacists on proper pain management as another approach to the opioid problem. Discussion followed regarding current and future programs/seminars to hold conversations regarding addiction.
- **Homelessness:** Homelessness exists in East Windsor. She is working with the Police Department to find residents, and the Superintendent of Schools to find the number of students, to offer assistance they’re willing to accept.
- **Monthly Budget Planner Assistance:** Assistance learning to manage income.

Mrs. Maltese reported the department uses social media to post information regarding available programs and the associated deadlines. Discussion followed regarding the availability of social media to seniors and residents needing assistance, and discussion of personal priorities.

Mrs. Maltese reported the Budget Request for Human Services is \$122,136, which is a reduction of minus 37.24%. Included in the reduction is the removal of the Director’s salary and benefits from the full-time salary line. Salaries represent 85% of this total department budget. Longevity will go up for long-standing employees. Travel has been reduced as employees participate in webinars rather than travel off-site. Education and dues has been reduced as the previous

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Director had a Masters of Social Work degree; she was required to complete continuing education to maintain her certification, which the Town would pay for. That funding is no longer needed. General Assistance, which would provide funding for one time purchases which don't qualify under the other assistance programs, such as a coat for a resident, has been increased \$1,000.

Parks and Recreation – 710200.

Mrs. Maltese summarized the purpose and functions of the Parks and Recreation Department. The department operates seven parks within the Town, and provides a multitude of programs and sports activities. They also work in conjunction with other departments, which has made the reorganization transition run pretty smoothly in her estimation. They also act as a liaison to youth sports organizations and the Hunger Action Team.

She noted the following FY 2017 – 2018 accomplishments:

- **Aquatics Program:** Staff has redesigned the aquatics program and has been able to reinstate the swimming lessons.
- **Logo:** Mrs. Maltese suggested use of the Town seal doesn't depict the purpose of the Parks and Recreation programs. To rebrand the department an outside firm was hired at a minimal cost to develop a new logo, which now contains a photo of each of the neighborhood parks along with the Town seal.

Mrs. Maltese reported her goals for FY 2018 – 2019 are the following:

- **Replace park signage:** Current signs lack “street” numbers, which is difficult for first responders to locate a specific facility. Address specific signage will reduce liability for the Town.
- **Town-wide mailing:** To provide information regarding town agencies, services, and libraries.
- **Splash Pad** – Secure funding for this handicapped accessible water feature which would be located at East Windsor (Reservoir) Park, which is a revenue generator for the Town.
- **Implement an after school activity program for Middle School students.**
- **Town-wide audit of park facilities and their respective equipment.**
- **Certified Playground Safety Inspection:** Park maintenance was previously handled by staff specific to the Parks and Recreation Department. That position was moved into the Department of Public Works. The Certified Playground Safety Inspection position, which would become the responsibility of an employee of the Public Works Department, would ensure that we are keeping up with the safety standards and maintenance/replacement of aging playground equipment. This staff member would perform the town-wide audit of park facilities and equipment noted above.

Mrs. Maltese reported the FY 2018 – 2019 Budget Request for the Parks and Recreation Department is \$283,640, which represents an increase of 19.58%. Mrs. Maltese noted the addition of an administrator's salary which reflects management of the three departments due to

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the reorganization is reflected in this budget; the other full-time employee was given more responsibility so she was given an increase. First Selectman Maynard has increased part-time employees salaries by 2%. The Water Safety Instructors needed to be bumped up because they didn't receive a raise last year due to the budget freeze. Salaries represent 78% of this total department budget; the operating budget for seven parks is 22% of the budget. The increase in the capital purchases line is for a container, similar to a POD, for storage of the portable ice rink and two bounce houses which are now stored at the Town Garage; they need their space back. Supplies and equipment purchases are maintenance items, such as fertilizer for the fields, paint for picnic tables, cleaning supplies for the bathrooms, wood palates for replacement of the catwalk at the dock, line paint for the fields for youth sports. New equipment would be purchased through the Public Works Department. Testing for drinking water quality is mandated by the State. Education and Dues are necessary to maintain certification and to keep up with trends in the field; they also participate in webinars. Site improvements reflect seasonal expenses, such as wood chips for the fall zones around playground equipment; this line item would also include the purchase of the signage discussed earlier.

Mrs. Maltese reported this department also provides revenue to the Town; for FY 2016 – 2017 East Windsor Park generated \$28,587 for their three month operation period. That money goes into the General Fund; it's not returned to the Park and Recreation budget.. The revenue is composed of \$10,000 in gate fees, \$1,000 season passes, \$6,296 snack bar income, \$3,800 swim lessons, and \$8,300 pavilion rentals. Mrs. Maltese reported that the previous year the Parks and Recreation Commission lifted the restriction on resident only attendance which increased gate fees; most people who attend the park are not residents as residents generally own their own pools.

Discussion followed regarding increasing park fees and comparisons to surrounding towns, such as South Windsor, and the affect on attendance. Mrs. Maltese suggested she felt a fairer comparison would be to Ellington with Crystal Lake, as South Windsor has three pools at Veterans Memorial Park. Mrs. Maltese reported South Windsor also allows alcohol at their park facilities; East Windsor does not. Mrs. Maltese reported they have been pushing pavilion rentals on Facebook; as a result they are getting more corporate rentals. She noted pavilion rentals also pay per person gate fees in addition to the rental fee. The pavilion isn't rented during the week as it's used in conjunction with the programs. Mrs. Maltese noted revenue has been increasing. Discussion continued regarding a history of gate fees, and a comparison to fee charges in surrounding towns.

Mrs. Maltese reported communication is big for this department; they have new software to accommodate users signing up and paying online with credit and debit cards; online payment is through Point N Pay through the Treasurer's Office. They also use Facebook, Twitter, and email blasts which appeal to the younger population. They continue to develop new programs. July is Park and Recreation Month during which they offer daily activities based on a theme. They also participate in National Night Out in conjunction with the Police Department and the Wellness Coalition Team.

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Selectman Szymanski questioned why they park hasn't incorporated a golf driving range; he noted the range in South Windsor was sold off for commercial development. Mrs. Maltese suggested her concern might be the liability created by people walking into the range. Selectman Szymanski noted the Town owns the 150 acres at the Kogut property across the street; he suggested that would be a suitable location. First Selectman Maynard suggested looking into someone renting part of the property to install a driving range. Mrs. Maltese noted other nearby municipal golf ranges; she could reach out to them. Selectman Hoffman would like the Town to hire a commercial real estate agent to market the 150 acres for lease. He felt the current farming lease is low; Selectman Hoffman didn't feel the Town is getting the maximum benefit from that land.

Selectman Dearborn requested clarification that the total increase for the Parks and Recreation Department is 19.58%? Mrs. Maltese concurred, noting the increase is due to the reorganization of the three departments and the salary increases.

Senior Services (Senior Center) - 710100:

Mrs. Maltese reported the Senior Center is an opportunity for seniors to interact and socialize; for some people it's their only contact with other people.

Mrs. Maltese reviewed some of the current services:

- **Transportation:** Senior vans transport people to appointments as needed, they take residents to the 5 Corner Cupboard and shopping at groceries, Walmart, and other locations, and provide transportation to and from the Senior Center.
- **Daily meals:** Provided and prepared by CRT (Community Renewal Team) offsite and brought to the Senior Center for consumption at the center.
- **Meals on Wheels:** Also prepared by CRT off-site, volunteers take meals to the resident's homes. Mrs. Maltese noted she's trying to attract new/younger volunteers.

Mrs. Maltese reported the following accomplishments in FY 2017

- **Provide an active activity calendar for the seniors.** With the new Calamar development coming in they're hoping to attract new/younger seniors by redevelopment of some of the programs.
- **Fresh produce provided by Geissler's.**
- **Veteran's Coffee Hour monthly at the Senior Center.**
- **Meals provided:** 4,286 meals shared at the Senior Center; 3,029 Meals on Wheels delivered to residents homes.
- **Transportation:** 10,294 trips provided covering about 32,000 miles.

Mrs. Maltese reported last year's budget for the Senior Center was \$187,158 for full time salaries. There was an increase in the position of Program Director due to the reorganization as she was given more responsibilities. Mrs. Maltese noted longevity is contractual. Selectman Szymanski requested clarification of the salary line. First Selectman Maynard reported that employee was given a grade increase; Interim Treasurer Carolus suggested the employee was

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given an increase in the hourly rate for the grade but continues to work her 25 hour week. Mrs. Maltese suggested this isn't a request for new money; it's money that was reallocated due to the reorganization. Discussion continued regarding budget increases associated with the reorganization.

Continuing her presentation Mrs. Maltese noted Professional services increased slightly to \$2,450; supplies and equipment increased to \$1180. Education and dues was reduced as the previous Director required training Mrs. Maltese doesn't need to attend. Mrs. Maltese indicated that salaries drive budgets; 96% of this total department budget is salaries. They operate on \$10,145, or 4% of the total budget.

Mrs. Maltese reported that the Transportation Program is the largest piece of the Senior Center budget; this ties into the Greater Hartford Transit District for the grant they get to run the buses. Discussion followed regarding the funding for this budget line. Mrs. Maltese suggested that the main thing that the Senior Center Budget pays for is the Transportation Coordinator; everything else is funded through the Greater Hartford Transit District and the grant that they get through the Dial-A-Ride Program. The Transportation Director is a full-time employee who works out of the Senior Center; she coordinates the drivers and creates the routes. There are two full-time drivers, and one part-time driver.

Mrs. Maltese gave a short history of participation in the nutrition programs:

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>MEALS ON WHEELS</u>	<u>SENIOR CENTER</u>
2015	56%	44%
2016	49%	51%
2017	31%	59%

Selectman Szymanski queried if people must be residents to participate in activities at the Senior Center? He cited East Windsor residents attend activities at South Windsor; he questioned the reason for the restriction? Mrs. Maltese reported the residency issue has been the past practice, although she doubted anyone would be turned away. She concurred that East Windsor residents go elsewhere. She felt much of that may be due to East Windsor's facility; it's difficult for people to get upstairs and up the ramp; both are steep and difficult for some of the seniors to navigate. Also, the useable area within the facility upstairs is small as there is one large room with only one divider for smaller programs. Mrs. Maltese noted there is no membership fee; donations are suggested for meals at the facility but no one is turned away. The donation charge for Meals on Wheels is controlled by CRT. Mrs. Maltese reported the monthly social event is the most largely attended program.

Selectman Hoffman questioned how many bus trips are scheduled? Mrs. Maltese indicated they plan one large trip per month, such as Hammonasset Beach, restaurants, Salem Crossings, Bright Lights in Hartford, the East Windsor Historical Society, and the Trolley Museum. Seniors also judge the local Holiday Lights Contest which gives them a trip around town.

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Mrs. Maltese reported Wii Bowling is the most popular of the current programs. New programs being developed are a partnership with Touchpoints at Chestnut; they 're hosting a Happy Birthday with Dr. Seuss breakfast for which they're bringing the food to the Senior Center. Staff are also developing a Trivia Contest. Yoga for Seniors, and a Social Media program. Melrose Place Farms brings fresh produce, to the Senior Center; seniors are able to use their Farmer's Market coupons for this produce.

The Board thanked Mrs. Maltese for her informative presentations.

PRESENTATIONS/c. 8:00 p.m. – Registrar of Voters – 411500:

Republican Registrar of Voters Linda Sinisgallo and Democratic Registrar of Voters Angelo Sevarino joined the Board. Mr. Sevarino explained that the Registrar of Voters provide for efficient and safe elections, and does so in a bipartisan way.

Mr. Sevarino reported the FY 2018 – 2019 Budget Request for the Registrar is \$63,925 which represents an increase of 1.50%.

Mr. Sevarino reported he and Mrs. Sinisgallo do not take salaries, as they feel the money needs to go elsewhere. The salaries reflected under the 2018 -2019 Budget Request reflect the salaries of those individuals who work the elections. He cited concern for an impending crisis of poll workers as many of the current individuals have worked for up to 30 years. He suggested it's difficult to find people willing to work 15 to 16 hour days at a low salary plus meals. Discussion followed regarding recruitment of new employees. Mr. Sevarino noted one of the employees is the position of Election Moderator (for each voting district); this person must be certified which requires commitment to off-site training. Mr. Sevarino reported the various positions served by the other employees.

Mr. Sevarino indicated that much of the duties of the Registrar of Voters is State mandated. Mr. Sevarino and Mrs. Sinisgallo must attend four regional meetings in Newington, two statewide conferences in Cromwell and Danbury, and must meet annually with the Secretary of State's Office. There is no charge for the regional conferences, while there is a cost associated with the State conferences; mileage compensation is provided. Registrar of Voters are mandated by the State to complete eight hours of continuing education annually; attendance at the conferences referenced above satisfies that requirement. Mr. Sevarino reported that Ms. Sinisgallo does not plan to seek re-election. The new Republican Registrar of Voters will be required to acquire 8 continuing education courses over the next two fiscal years to attain certification. Mr. Sevarino reported he has completed his certification requirement.

Mr. Sevarino noted the need to consider replacement for voting stations; the useful life of the present stations should be reviewed. They have requested an increase in the printing line. Printed ballots must be available for all registered voters; there are currently 8100 votes in East Windsor. They are requesting an increase in this line as they anticipate an increase in voter registration. Mr. Sevarino noted they have reduced the funding request for the media card line; media cards are needed to calculate the election results quickly and securely.

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Mr. Sevarino reported they have not requested funding for capital purchases, however, the office is shabby, desks and other office equipment is very old, there is only one fireproof filing cabinet, and the carpeting is shabby as well. The office must be staffed on Election Day, and people do visit to ask questions about the voting process and voter registration. The office doesn't reflect well on East Windsor.

Mr. Sevarino also expressed concern that the portable generator may not provide back-up power to the Registrar's Office during a power failure. Mr. Sevarino requested confirmation of the availability of back-up power. The voting machines, some of which are stored at the Town Hall Annex, must be totally secured at all times. Discussion followed regarding the consequences of potential power failures. First Selectman Maynard questioned if creating one voting district would be helpful? Mrs. Sinisgallo suggested one district disenfranchises one district or the other; there is the concern that traveling across town to a central location would reduce an already low voter turnout. Selectman Hoffman cited concern regarding the generator. Discussion followed regarding hiring an electrician to confirm the power availability, or the lack of same.

Selectman Hoffman questioned the size of the Registrar's Office? Mr. Sevarino guesstimated 10 feet by 10 feet; Mrs. Sinisgallo suggested it had previously been the nurse's office at the Warehouse Point School. Discussion followed regarding project cost and funding availability via the CIP projects vs. an additional appropriation following the BOS/BOF approval process (followed by a Town Meeting if the cost exceeds \$20,000). It was noted reasonably priced furniture and office equipment may be available through the State surplus equipment. Selectman Hoffman requested the Registrars provide specifications for hiring an electrical contractor to investigate the portable generator issue and for the office upgrade. Mr. Sevarino agreed to research the requested information.

The Board thanked Mr. Sevarino and Mrs. Sinisgallo for their presentation. The Board also noted their regret with Mrs. Sinisgallo's retirement, and thanked her for many years of professional and committed service.

ADJOURNMENT:

MOTION: To ADJOURN this Meeting at 9:50 p.m.

Bowsza moved/Dearborn seconded/VOTE: In Favor: Unanimous

Respectfully submitted

Peg Hoffman, Recording Secretary, East Windsor Board of Selectmen