**Approved Minutes**

**Present**: Ted Turner, Dean Markham, David Monighetti, Marc Lambert, Alan Hurst and Mary Ann Dostaler

**Not Present:** Lori Wilcox

**Other attendee(s):** Jeffery M. Jylkka: Director of Finance

**1-2. Chairman Turner called the meeting to order at 6:33 p.m. followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.**

**3. Public Remarks:**

 Chairman Turner opened the floor for public comment:

**Tim Csere – 47 Jacobson Farm Rd:** Mr. Csere wanted to comment on the Citizen’s Guide for this year (both pro and con). He liked the graphics this year and that more information was provided (7 pages as opposed to 4 pages last year). East Hampton “by the numbers” was not included this year, however, which was a disappointment. He would like to see it put back in next year. Navigating the budget break-down was a nice addition and while a good amount of Education statistics were provided that showed how hard our educators and students are working with what they have, some statistics made him more curious than convinced as to what they were representing. Overall he feels that the Board did a great job on the guide this year.

Mr. Csere then moved on to comment on the proposed budget. He began by stating the following:

*“Fact: Our Education and Town Operation Expenses are low compared to our comparison towns (peers).*

*Fact: Our financial discipline has left us with little debt and even with the High School renovation we will have less debt than our peers.*

That leaves the Town with a long list of items to consider (municipal building issues, IT constraints and needs, staffing short falls, etc.).” He went on to acknowledge that East Hampton has more residents than 10 years ago with more needs and expectations and he does not understand how those needs can be met with less town employees and insufficient

capabilities. He asked that the Board listen to the needs presented and approve the budget as proposed.

**Tania Sones – 17 Curry Ln:** Ms. Sones stated that she attended the Board of Education (BOE) workshop held on 4/20 and wanted to comment based on her observations and research. She understands that the BOE budget as presented reflects a 3.39% increase and knows that the Board is aware that some of that is required in order to adhere to state mandates (incl: common core, technological integration, etc.). In addition, state grants are declining which leaves the tax payers responsible for picking up the bill on these mandates. She went on to comment on the declining enrollment numbers and cited program and curriculum. We need to update current programs and support the educators (with the necessary resources and training) in order to be able to meet state mandates. She also respectfully disagreed with Mr. Hurst’s comment at the BOE workshop that people would not understand why resources are being reduced but budget is being increased. She acknowledged that she understands that reallocation of resources is occurring, and that training, required software and other resources in order to meet mandates costs money.

Ms. Sones closed with a request that the Board not cut any of the BOE proposed budget.

**4. Discuss and take possible action on the Co. #2 Firehouse boiler**

Ms. Dostaler began the discussion mentioning that at the respective workshop, the Chief seemed unaware that Co. #2 had been removed from the natural gas boiler conversion plan and informed the Board that, at the very least, the burner will require replacement in the 15/16 fiscal year. Ms. Dostaler stated in her that in her opinion, since that firehouse will continue to be used as a firehouse for the foreseeable future, it only makes since to add it back into the municipal building conversion plan. She then deferred to Mr. Jylkka in regard to historical documentation and impacts to the budgets if it were to be added back in. Mr. Jylkka stated that, contrary to original belief, the town does hold the deed (from 1977) to the building under the provision that it only be used as a firehouse else be returned to grantor. The quote to covert the boiler to gas is approximately $23,000. He went on to say that given the $1.2 million slated for the natural gas conversion project and the deferment of other budgeted projects (water boiler replacement at Center School and fuel tank monitoring) as a result of the conversion project, it is hopeful that that the $23,000 can be covered.

Discussions continued with differing opinions from Board members as to the fiscal sense in adding Co. #2 back into the municipal conversion plan (Dostaler), or simply replacing the burner and not converting to gas (Markham) or the need for more information before deciding (Turner, Monighetti, Lambert, Hurst). Mr. Maniscalco and Mr. Visintainer, who were in the audience, were consulted during the discussion. Discussion to continue on this item.

***No action taken.***

**5. 2015-2016 Budget**

Chairman Turner asked the Board for opinions on the $42,289,000 proposed Budget.

Ms. Dostaler began the discussion by stating that she was comfortable with the budget as presented and saw no reason to reduce it. She went on to say that the overriding sentiment that East Hampton is a “1 mill town” is a false narrative and a realistic budget must be passed. A 1.77 mill increase is reasonable, fair and responsible she stated.

Chairman Turner followed Ms. Dostaler stating he felt the mill increase needed to get down to 1.40 mills (a $400,000 reduction according to Mr. Jylkka). He suggested looking at the Police overtime and financing the Trackless being requested by Public Works to get some of the $400,000.

Mr. Markham however, citing the high school building committee situation and the historic town mindset, proposed a reduction to a .7 -.9 mill increase ($1.1 million or more budget reduction). The rest of the Board felt this type of reduction was unreasonable and would mean cuts in service they do not support.

The opinions of the Board were rounded out with Mr. Hurst suggesting some “tweaks” are necessary, Mr. Monighetti stating he is not willing to make any “major” changes to either the Town or BOE budgets given they are “acceptable and necessary” but Capital needs to be looked at further and Mr. Lambert reiterating that there are some areas to look at closer.

Through discussion, Ms. Dostaler stated she was willing to look at some Capital numbers closer in order to slightly reduce the mill increase.

Throughout the discussion, Chief Cox, Mr. Maniscalco and Town Council Chairwoman Moore, who were all in the audience, were consulted for comment.

With no specific budget changes being decided upon, the discussion concluded with a shift from budget dollars to public involvement and the hope for an unprecedented turnout at the Public Hearing on 3/30.

 ***No action taken.***

1. **Adjournment:**

Mr. Monighetti made a motion to adjourn at 8:05 p.m. that was seconded by Mr. Hurst. **Vote was unanimous in favor. Motion Passed.**

Respectfully submitted,

Renee Bafumi

Recording Secretary