**Approved Minutes**

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

**Not Present:** Lori Wilcox and David Monighetti

**Other Attendee(s):** Michael Maniscalco: EH Town Manager

**1-2. Chairman Turner called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.**

**3. Public Remarks:**

**Don Coolican – 18 West Lane**: Commended the Board and Council Members for expediting the process between Referendum 2 and 3 (3 weeks duration). He went on to say that the process should always be only 3 weeks between. He also went on to suggest that the budget process should begin earlier in the year so that votes can begin in April rather than May.

**Ted Barber – 50 Mott Hill Road:** Expressed his distaste with the fact that Referendum 3 had no additional cuts and suggested that the Board and Council think that residents are “dumb”. He went on to say that residents “are tired of being lied to and tired of being ripped-off”. He finished by suggesting that unless cuts are made the same thing will happen again (budget fail).

**Valerie Steiner – 21 Curry Lane:** As a frequent speaker at meetings, Ms. Steiner acknowledged that the Board made “modest cuts” last time around because the public that attended and spoke requested that only modest cuts be made. She went on to acknowledge that if significant cuts are made this time around (especially to BoE) there has been agreement amongst the “out-spoken Yes vote community” that they will vote “No” this time around.

**Kyle Dostaler – 56 William Drive:** Believes the budget should have passed the first time around but, acknowledged that the residents don’t like surprises and the $750,000 technology for education addition was a surprise. He went on to say that the perception is that that $750,000 impacts the budget and mill rate. He also touched on the changes occurring with the School Administration and suggested that removing the $750,000 may put some residents at ease.

 **Paul Battista – EH Police Sergeant:** Wanted to address the possible elimination of the ½ year Patrolman and speak to staffing levels. When he joined the force 20 years ago, he was number 12 and shortly thereafter there were 15. They are not looking for extra; they just want to get back to where they were. Officers are frequently working 12-16 hour shifts and there is a significant amount of overtime on the books. While all officers are dedicated, they are just being “run-ragged” and are exhausted. What makes it worse are that the comments in the paper are always negative. Currently, staff levels do not even equal one officer per thousand. Again, they are not asking for extra; just asking for the past levels to be restored.

**Sean Cox – EH Police Chief:** Wanted everyone to know that, showing his commitment to the town, Sergeant Battista has been working injured for the past several weeks (wearing a walking cast). He also mention that he has seen comments in the paper about staffing and scheduling but has not had 1 resident, or Council/Board member for that matter, come and ask to see the schedule nor educated themselves on actual information. He just asked that, before people write letters or make public comment, they have the facts rather than the rumors.

**Steven Ritchie – 56 Keighley Pond Road:** Observed that there is a lot of emphasis being put on how not to alienate “Yes” voters with little to no discussion on how to bring “No” voters around. He hopes the Board realizes that it is a 2-way street.

Also submitted, and made part of these minutes, were 4 emails sent to the Board from residents that have been “Yes” voters but are threatening to vote “No” if too much is cut. Email submissions were from:

1. **Tania Sones – 17 Curry Lane**
2. **Susan DeRosa – Address not provided**
3. **Laureen Coppolelli – 6 Michael Drive**
4. **Nancy Kohler – 31 Daniel Street**

It was addressed by Mr. Hurst, somewhat later in the meeting, that with more than 10 opportunities for this Board to hear Public Comment, this is the first time that any comments have referenced that cuts are needed. The Board has been reacting based on comments from public because people with opinions like Mr. Barber and Mr. Ritchie have not attended and commented.

1. **Discuss and take possible action on an additional appropriation or transfer of funds in Capital ($120,000 FY2014-2015) for remediation costs associated with the conversion of Town owned facilities to natural gas**

Upon the opening of discussion on this item, a motion was made by Mr. Markham and was seconded by Mr. Hurst on the following Resolution:

***Resolved, that the Board if Finance recommends that the Town Council transfer one hundred twenty thousand dollars ($120,000) for remediation costs in connection with the conversion to natural gas fuel of the boilers in various town and school buildings, including the Middle School, the Memorial School the Center School, the Board of Education Central Office, the Library/Community Center, the Town Hall/Police Department Building, the fire Department Company #1 station and the Public Works Building (the “Project”); and the appropriation shall be transferred from Capital Fund, Track Resurfacing ($120,000) and the total amount shall be transferred to the Capital Reserve Fund, Natural Gas Boiler Replacement. The appropriation may be spent for remediation costs, and other expenses related to the project. Upon completion of the project unexpended funds shall be returned to Track Resurfacing.***

Prior to a vote, it was noted that, per Mr. Jylkka: Finance Director, this transfer is necessary because of timing issues. Because we do not have an approved budget, we do not have sufficient funds to cover the remediation costs and cannot execute the contract with the vendor. There is not a concern with the lease component at this time.

Ms. Dostaler also acknowledged that the other option on the table (additional appropriation from fund balance) would have required a Town Meeting and would have further impacted the timing of the project. She finally requested that the appropriate adjustments to fully reinstate the Track Surfacing item are discussed during the Budget conversation.

***Vote: 5-0. Motion Passed.***

1. **Discuss and Take Possible Action on a recommended 2015-2016 Budget (4th**

 **Referendum) for Town Council**

Upon the opening of discussion on this item, a motion was made by Mr. Markham and was seconded by Mr. Hurst on the following Resolution:

***Resolved that the Board of Finance approves and adopts the Town Council approved Budget from the Third Referendum in the amount of $41,377,520 with the following amendments:***

***Reduction of:***

* ***$285,000 From (Board of) Education***
* ***$ 20,000 From Conservation & Lake Commission –***

 ***Prof & Tech Services***

* ***$ 5,000 From Culture & Recreation - Middle Haddam***

 ***Public Library***

***\_\_\_\_\_\_\_***

***Total: $310,000***

***Resulting in an Amended Budget Total of $41,067,510***

Mr. Markham stated that the results of the 3rd Referendum showed him that although the previous Referendums were close, further “reductions of increases” are warranted.

Mr. Lambert responded to the motion by distributing an exhibit he created that provided a more detailed view of the Capital Improvements Budget and clearly highlighted the significant amount of money in Road Repairs ($210.5% increase from 2014/15 to 2015/16) and the fact that we have yet to use the appropriations from the last two years. After further discussion which included some explanation from Mr. Maniscalco on upcoming needs (road repairs after gas line trench settling and increased costs of salt and other winter treatment chemicals), Mr. Lambert shared that he would like to make a less dramatic reduction from Education (between $175,000 and $200,000) and a reduction in the Road Repairs (between $75,000 and $100,000).

Ms. Dostaler agreed with Mr. Lambert that the proposed $285,000 from Education is too high and that some money could be taken from Road Repairs but also voiced her opinion that the

$750,000 technology initiative for schools should be removed. She even suggested taking more from the MH Library item.

Chairman Turner, along with Mr. Markham, once again addressed the need for and their support of the $750,000 and went on to discuss differing opinions on the Lake reduction item.

Agreement was made to adjust the motion on the table to reflect the following:

***Reduction of:***

* ***$200,000 From (Board of) Education***
* ***$ 85,000 From Road Repairs (Capital)***
* ***$ 20,000 From Conservation & Lake Commission –***

 ***Prof & Tech Services***

* ***$ 5,000 From Culture & Recreation - Middle Haddam***

 ***Public Library***

***Still equaling a Total reduction of $310,000 and an Amended Budget Total of $41,067,510. In Mr. Jylkka’s absence, Mr. Lambert shared that this reduction would result in a Mill Rate increase of .66 (a 2.43% increase).*** *(For reference, Mr. Lambert also shared that two years ago the Town had a 2.54% increase and last year, a 1.92% increase).*

***Vote: 4-1. Motion Passed.***

1. **Adjournment:**

 Mr. Markham made a motion to adjourn at 7:16 p.m. that was seconded by Mr. Lambert.

 **Vote was unanimous in favor. Motion Passed.**