

**TOWN OF EAST HAMPTON  
EAST HAMPTON, CT 06424**

**BOARD OF FINANCE**

Monday, April 3, 2017  
EH Middle School Library

**Approved Minutes**

**Present:** Marc Lambert, Janine Jiantonio, Alannah Coshow, Steve Ritchie, Alan Hurst and Michael Rose (Mr. Rose arrived at 6:40 during agenda item 3)

**Not Present:** Dean Markham (Mr. Markham committed to speak at a East Hampton 250<sup>th</sup> Celebration event prior to the meeting being rescheduled)

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

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

**3. Public Remarks**

After informing the audience of approximately 150 people of the child care available during the meeting and outlining the process for public remarks:

- Using the microphone (so that everyone could hear remarks)
- Signing in (to assist with proper documentation on minutes)
- Keeping remarks to 3 minutes or less (in order to allow any and all that want to speak ample time)

Chairman Lambert opened the floor for public remarks.

**Dean Michelson: 127 Tartia Rd./EH Public Works Director:** Asked that the Board reconsider the proposed \$14,800 cut to the Public Works budget outlining the reasons for each line item and the impacts to the department and town if cut.

**Rachel Parent - 10 Dogwood Dr.:** Asked the Board to not cut the BOE budget.

**Kate Adams - 21 N. Cone Rd.:** Has 4 kids that are or will be going through the school system and sees first hand crowded classrooms and lack of needed resources in classrooms. With more kids predicted in various grades, sees no place to possibly cut.

**Jill Riegler - 62 Saffron Ln.:** Asked the Board to not cut the BOE budget stating that even small cuts have a large impact to the schools.

**Holly White - 82 Young St./EHHS Cheer Coach:** As an educator in another district she sees and understands impacts to education and as head of "all things cheer in East Hampton" (High School, Middle School and Hawks Football) she is invested in the Town and is looking for an "extra set of eyes" (i.e. JV Coach) for safety reasons for the girls. She asked that this fiscally conservative BOE budget be sent forth with no cuts.

**Patience Coleman - 52 School House Ln.:** Sees overcrowded classes and predicts serious impacts to children's futures if cuts occur.

**Ellen Nosal - 152 Main St.:** Stated that she and others are ready to put their money where their mouth is and therefore requested no cuts to the BOE or the Public Library budgets.

**Mary Ann Dostler - 56 Williams Dr.:** Addressed 3 points: 1) with the bifurcation, people thought they were voting for the ability to vote on a BOE budget as presented by the BOE and that the BOF would not have input. 2) In regard to the proposed Library cuts, .02% cut (of overall

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budget) may seem meaningless but that cut would be devastating to the Library. She went on to suggest that if looking for a cut, make it the Middle Haddam Library annual donation, and not the public Library. 3) Expressed concern with the depletion of the mill rate stabilization fund through off-budget appropriations.

**Tania Sones - 17 Curry Ln.:** The low taxes were appealing when she moved here 4 years ago but now she is realizing what is really going on. She asked the Board to stop under-funding budgets.

**Bob Hein - 19 Birchwood Dr.:** As a substitute teacher in town, he knows that great schools equals a great town. While he doesn't want to pay a lot for taxes, he understands the need to pay enough.

**Ellen Paul - 14 Daly Rd.:** Speaking as the new Library Director (3 weeks on the job), she asked for the opportunity to show how the Library can continue to benefit the town. With 9,000 of our 13,000 residents holding Library cards, she feels the Library is valuable to many and wants to be able to keep it that way.

**Amy Ordonez – 116 Main St.:** Stated that the people should have the right to vote on the BOE budget as is. Also, as the chair of the Library Advisory Board, she knows how state cuts will impact the Library and its patrons and asked that the budget not be cut as well.

**Julie Riegler - 62 Saffron Ln.:** As a EHHS freshman, she is asking that cuts do not occur. As a volleyball player, she is looking for the JV coach position to come to fruition.

**Ines Venetianer – 17 Berkshire Dr.:** Can't understand how the Board can even consider cutting safety for the schools (capital budget).

**Cristin Flannery - 8 Flannery Row:** Stated that she and many others voted for the bifurcation so that the BOE budget would be put to vote as presented. She then asked that the BOF allow for that to occur.

**Nancy Oakley - 71 Pocotopaug Dr.:** Referenced the petition being circulated to put forth the BOE budget as presented and stated that part of the bifurcation was to provide transparency into what people are truly voting yes or no for.

**Gabriella Crean – 35 Lake Dr.:** As a EHHS Cheerleader, Ms. Crean spoke about safety issues and lack of efficient practice time with only Ms. White as Coach. She asked that the BOE budget not be cut.

**Lois Sprague – Center School Teacher:** Shared the difficulties she sees and faces herself with large class sizes and noted that enrollment predictions are not only high for September, but children have been enrolling mid-year (3 - 5<sup>th</sup> graders this month alone) impacting classroom resources in ways not planned for last budget.

**Alex Curylo – 4 Blue Heron Dr.:** As a EHHS Senior, Mr. Curylo reflected on the fantastic teachers and wonderful memories he will carry with him as he goes to college. He asked that the Board allow the children in town the opportunity for the same, certainly not less.

**Jarod Bushey – 149 Main St.:** As a member of the BOE, reminded the Board members that a lot of work went into coming up with the 3.75 including not meeting contractual obligations and funding new position through offsets in other areas not through increases to the budget.

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**Melissa Curylo – 4 Blue Heron Dr.:** Moved her family here 10 years ago because of the education ratings and even ended up becoming employed by the school system. After her children receiving great educations and almost matriculating out, she understands it is her turn to pay it forward so that other children can have the same experience.

**Jane Morrel – 23 Seven Hills Crossing:** Removed her kids from Magnet Schools and moved to town so that her kids could benefit from the new High School. She is starting to regret that decision. She requested that cuts not be made to the BOE budget.

**Joanne Barmasse – 6 Tiffany Ct.:** As a BOE member, reminded the Board that before the insurance increase was introduced by the state, they were proposing a Budget at 2.25. The extra 1.5 bringing it to 3.75 reflects the insurance.

**Paul Herlihy – 41 Ridgeview Dr:** Not feeling a need to reiterate all of the previous comments (of which he agreed), he stated that “we are not helping the town (especially the Seniors) by taking away from the kids”. Noting the “us vs. them” mentality that seems to often be put forth during budget time, he noted his experiences of how the two groups benefit from each other.

**Emily Cronin - 24 Abbey Rd.:** Asked that cuts be reconsidered noting that school safety cuts would just be unconscionable.

**Sean Stokel – 9 Spice Hill Dr.:** As an EHHS student he witnesses on a daily basis the dedication of the teachers and supports the BOE budget as presented.

#### **4. 2017-2018 Budget Discussion and Deliberation**

Mr. Hurst began the discussion by clarifying that the bifurcation of the budgets in no way strips the BOF of their responsibility to review and put forth a budget they feel is appropriate. He then stated that in response to the public remarks, he would be willing to put forth the BOE budget without cuts as long as the public understands that they will need many more people than those in the room to get it passed and that if it does not pass, more than the currently proposed \$272,270 will most likely be cut.

Mr. Rose then reiterated Mr. Hurst’s clarification of the bifurcation from the perspective of a member of the Charter Revision Committee and outlined the responsibilities of the BOF as written in the Charter. He then spoke to the State level impacts hindering the process and causing uncertainty on how to move forward in some areas. He then encouraged the public to speak to committees and representatives at the state level as well since this Board can only work with what is handed down from them.

Ms. Coshov acknowledged for the public why Mr. Markham was unable to attend as well as stating that the Board needs to strike the right balance with the tax burden. She also took the time to acknowledge a “sidebar” that occurred (out in the hall) during the BOE workshop between Chairman Lambert and Superintendent Smith. She expressed concern with the “secrecy” of the discussion and if it was proper conduct of these individuals during the workshop. If relevant to the discussion, she questioned why the details were not shared with the rest of the Board and if not relevant, she questioned why it occurred when it did.

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Chairman Lambert then provided a handout he created with the help of Mr. Jylkka to help drive the budget discussion (handouts were provided to the public as well as the other Board members).

After review and explanation of his handout which broke down the components that contribute to a proposed mill rate increase for 2018 of 2.85% as well as provided historical information from previous year budgets and mill rate components he hoped that the public had a better understanding of the difficult discussions/decisions the "unknowns" from the state are causing. Mr. Rose followed the handout explanation with a recommendation that his fellow Board Members do not assume worst case with the state "unknowns" but instead recommend something "in the middle". Mr. Ritchie then, acknowledging Mr. Markham's continued stance to wait for the state budget, suggested waiting as an option once again. In response, Mr. Lambert stated that while he understands why the option is on the table, he is hesitant to void the responsibility (of the BOF) set forth by the charter. Mr. Hurst closed the discussion by acknowledging that some of the "unknown" pieces (i.e. insurance) should be known relatively soon and that their current responsibility is to vote on the expense budgets. There is still, therefore, a window of time to find out more in order to better understand the revenue side.

## **5. Public Remarks:**

**Donna Kirk – 51 Chestnut Hill:** This whole thing (state impacts and such a large potential increase to the mill rate) "scares the hell" out of her but she needs to pay so that others can experience the same success the school system provided her son with. She stated that it is time (for everyone) to do the right thing.

**Mary Ann Dostler - 56 Williams Dr.:** While she appreciated the handout provided to the public in order to follow along with the Boards discussion, she again reiterated her 3<sup>rd</sup> point from the first round of public remarks about the consistent misuse of mill rate stabilization funds for things like the new fire truck that was bought in cash rather than leasing or taking out bonds.

**Ines Venetianer – 17 Berkshire Dr.:** In response to Mr. Rose's comments about getting involved at the state level, Ms. Venetianer shared that her family member have been attending appropriation committee meetings in Hartford. She also suggested that putting-off the vote (while waiting for the state to finalize their budget) may not be "fair" as referendum votes that occur in the summer (after school gets out) impacts voters due to vacations ("and we all know that absentee ballots don't really impact the vote")

**Jarod Bushey – 149 Main St.:** Mr. Bushey once again touched on the potential ECS cuts and reminded the Board to insure they are looking at the most recent numbers when discussing, that they remember all 3 pieces that contribute and that they consider the consequences before finalizing their recommendation.

In closing, Chairman Lambert, reiterated some of what Mr. Hurst had touched on earlier. Historically only 22 or 23% of registered voters come out for referendum as opposed to 80%+ for

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Presidential elections (when CT really does not impact). He encouraged people to get their family, friends and neighbors to the poles.

**14. Adjournment:**

The motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Hurst and was seconded by Mr. Ritchie.

**Vote: 7-0. Motion Passed. Meeting adjourned at 8:17pm.**

Respectfully submitted,

Renee Bafumi  
Recording Secretary