

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

BOARD OF FINANCE

Monday, March 27, 2017
EH Middle School Library

Approved Minutes

Present: Marc Lambert, Janine Jiantonio, Alannah Coshow, Steve Ritchie, Alan Hurst and Dean Markham

Other attendee(s): Jeffery Jylkka: Director of Finance, Michael Maniscalco: Town Manager

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

3. Nominations and Election of Chairperson (currently vacant)

*Ms. Coshow made a motion to elect Marc Lambert as Chairperson of the BOF. The motion was seconded by Mr. Hurst. **Vote: 5-0-1(Lambert). Motion Passed.***

4. Nominations and Election of Vice-Chairperson (if needed)

Since the current Vice-Chairperson, Marc Lambert, was elected to fill the vacant Chairperson seat, *Mr. Ritchie made a motion to elect Janine Jiantonio as Vice-Chairperson of the BOF. The motion was seconded by Ms. Coshow. **Vote: 5-0-1 (Jiantonio). Motion Passed.***

5. Approval of Minutes of Meetings:

- a) March 13, 2017 – Special Meeting**
- b) March 15, 2017 – Budget Workshop**
- c) March 16, 2017 – Budget Workshop**
- d) March 17, 2017 – Budget Workshop**
- e) March 18, 2017 – Budget Workshop**

*Mr. Hurst made a motion to approve the minutes after correction of a misspelled name (Wolton to Walton) on the March 16th minutes. The motion was seconded by Ms. Coshow. **Vote: 6-0. Motion Passed.***

6. Public Remarks

After outlining the changes made at the March 20, 2017 special meeting of the Board of Finance to the meeting schedule:

- Move the March 22nd BoF Special Meeting to March 27th (this meeting)
- Move the previously scheduled Public Hearing on March 27th to April 3rd
- Have final deliberation on April 10th (BoF Special Meeting) in order to present a recommended budget to the Town Council on April 11th.

Chairman Lambert opened the floor to Public remarks.

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Nancy Oakley – 71 Pocotopaug Dr.: While in support of both budgets as presented, Ms. Oakely requested that the BOF move the BOE budget forward uncut/unchanged since it is already not enough.

Ines Venetianer – 17 Berkshire Dr.: Asked that the BOF support the BOE budget as presented highlighting the possible impacts if reduced (sports, languages, teachers/class size) and simply stating the budget as presented consists of needs, not wants.

Nancy Kholer – 31 Daniel St.: Spoke in support of the BOE budget as presented and referencing a quote from Mr. Ritchie from the last meeting, stated that they are not just numbers on a page, they are people (staff and students).

Kathryn Werme – 32 Oak Knoll Rd.: Asked the BOF to put forth the BOE budget as presented and to let the voters speak because it will pass as is.

7. 2017-2018 Budget Discussion and Deliberation

Chairman Lambert opened the discussion by informing the Board and the public that he has requested another Budget Workshop for the BOE and BOF that will take place on Friday, March 31st at the EH Middle School Library at 4:00pm. He is calling for this additional meeting to drill down further into the BOE budget and to insure that the BOF members have a clear understanding of the BOE budget. He also clarified that he had no intention to call for a vote this evening and that discussion should simply be putting forth recommended changes with no expectation of finalizing anything this evening.

Mr. Hurst then continued discussion by reiterating his previous recommendation to not include the 1.6 Million Contingency proposed by the BoE (a 1.44 mill impact) given that all indications at the state level are that it will not pass. Mr. Ritchie supported that recommendation and set forth additional recommendations including cutting \$272,270 from the BOE budget, \$15,000 in school security upgrades from the capital budget and \$33,217 from the General Government budget. Ms. Coshow followed Mr. Ritchie's recommendations with the detailed line items that equate to the totals (4-page document outlining the recommended changes made part of these minutes. Please reference document for detail).

Keeping in mind that the Board is not responsible for identifying how cuts would be implemented in the Education budget, as well as the impending additional workshop to discuss the Education budget, most of the remaining discussion focused on the Town budget. While some proposed cuts did not spark much debate (Board of Assessment Appeals cuts, Registrar's budget remaining flat and maintenance costs for the Volunteer Ambulance facility) other items did including proposed cuts to the Public Library budget and Town-wide Fuel Island Maintenance. Mr. Hurst passionately, disagreed with any cuts to the Library stating that not only is the library a valued resource to the community but with a new Library Director still in her first month of employment, major cuts would not send the right message welcoming her nor supporting her success. While the Town Vehicle Fuel Island is being replaced, the Town Manager as well as some Board members clarified that

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the timing of the switch over does not necessarily support slashing the maintenance budget this soon in the project. Throughout discussion, Mr. Markham continued to support the need to hold off on a budget until more is known on true state impacts stating much of the discussion points on the table are because of the unknowns at the state level. There was, however, bipartisan support in reducing the legal budgets on both the Education and Town side with Board members pleading with both sides to stop suing itself and come to a resolution on the issue of appointing replacement members to the BOE.

Chairman Lambert closed the discussion with a personal response to the public comments. Having had 3 children go through the East Hampton Public School System, he does not want the system to be sold short. He acknowledged the lack of "extras" but couldn't commend the educators more for the excellent job they do. He went on to emphasize the job of the BoF is not only to find savings where possible but to also educate the public on the reasoning behind proposed changes. He closed by saying that while we could spend more everywhere, this is not the environment to do so.

8. Public Remarks:

Joanne Barmasse – 6 Tiffany Ct.: Speaking as a member of the BOE, Ms. Barmasse objected to Finance members' characterization of the legal situation stating that certain members of the Council are power-hungry and the BOE just wants what is within their rights as set forth by the Charter revision vote. Ms. Barmasse also mentioned her disagreement with the frequent emphasis and concern surrounding how Seniors are impacted by the budget.

Paul Smith – 94 Main St.: Speaking as Superintendent of Schools, Mr. Smith welcomed the additional workshop being scheduled and then went on to address the glaring weaknesses in school safety and stating that it is not prudent to cut.

Manda Heltke – 2 Julia Ter.: In reference to multiple comments around this being a difficult year for the town financially, stated that there will never be a year that isn't difficult. She also stated that with a child in Kindergarten, the safety cuts and lack of supplies for classrooms "scars the hell" out of her.

Stuart Winquist – 11 S. Main St.: Stated that he supports the 3.75 BOE budget and while not normally permitted during public comment, Mr. Winquist asked for clarification on a few things around the impacts of certain cuts and process after a state budget is set. Chairman Lambert did his best to answer questions while acknowledging not a normal practice.

Tania Sones – 17 Curry Ln.: Referencing past mill rate increases for the town, Ms. Sones addressed the historic reactive nature of the town and suggested that a proactive budget for once while a shock to some is necessary now more than ever.

Patience Anderson – 17 Anderson Way: Speaking as Town Council Chair, Ms. Anderson explained that with the HS debt upon us, real reductions are necessary and full explanation behind decisions being made is owed to the public. She also explained the programs available to assist

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people on a fixed income. Finally, she addressed the legal fee issue simply stating that the Council is the defendant in the suit.

Dave Selger – 27 Blue Heron Dr.: Expressed concern with the estimating occurring (due to state unknowns) and the associated possible risks.

Kim Fentress – 4 Curry Ln.: Thanked Mr. Hurst for acknowledging that the responsibility of how the BOE deals with cuts to their budget is not up to the BOF and thanked Chairman Lambert for not allowing for hasty decisions being made (i.e. not allowing a vote tonight). Ms. Fentress also reminded the Board that they are not just talking about numbers but that behind every number is a person or people being affected.

Nancy Oakley - 71 Pocotopaug Dr.: Thanked Chairman Lambert for sharing his personal experiences with the school system and emphasized the transparency in why decisions are being made.

Mr. Hurst asked to make a closing comment. Referencing the ongoing debate between seniors vs. children and who is being hurt by the budget, he stated that there will never be a time when everyone is happy and, therefore in the end, "if everyone is just a little unhappy with the budget" the Board has done it's job.

14. Adjournment:

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

Vote: 6-0. Motion Passed. Meeting adjourned at 8:27 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Renee Bafumi
Recording Secretary