

Town of East Hampton
Town Council Regular Meeting
Tuesday, April 10, 2018
East Hampton High School T-Bell

MINUTES

Present: Chairperson Melissa Engel, Vice Chairman Mark Philhower, Council Members Pete Brown, Tim Feegel, Dean Markham, Josh Piteo and Kevin Reich and Town Manager Michael Maniscalco

Call to order & Pledge of Allegiance

Chairperson Engel called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. in the High School T-Bell.

Adoption of Agenda

A motion was made by Mr. Reich, seconded by Mr. Philhower, to move item Transmittal of 2018-2019 Budget from Board of Finance and Discussion & Possible Action on Budget by Town Council to follow Public Remarks. Voted (7-0)

A motion was made by Mr. Reich, seconded by Mr. Philhower, to adopt the agenda as amended. Voted (7-0)

Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by Mr. Reich, seconded by Mr. Brown, to approve the minutes of the Town Council Regular Meeting of March 27, 2018 as written. Voted (7-0)

Presentations

None

Public Remarks

Chris Goff, Chairman of the Board of Education, read a statement on behalf of the Board of Education urging the Council to reject the budget and send it back to the Board of Finance noting that the current Board of Education budget does not meet all contractual obligations.

Nancy Oakley, 71 Pocotopaug Drive, asked that the Town Council reject the budget and send it back to the Board of Finance for restoration of funds and would like the Council to use fund balance.

Jennifer Palma, 3 Wangonk Trail, noted her concern for large class sizes and would like the budget to be sent back to the Board of Finance and not cut programs or teachers.

Charise Corsino, 63 Skyline Drive, would like the budget sent back to the Board of Finance to restore education funding.

Sonja Venetianer, 17 Berkshire Drive, a 10- year old student explained why there should not be cuts and asked that the education budget is restored.

Lois Sprague, Center School Music Teacher, is worried about the children and asked that the funds are returned to the budget.

Eloise Alford, 74 Quiet Woods Road, a 5-year old Kindergarten student said her teacher deserves her job because she is the best.

Taylor Karabetsos, 19 Mathieu Lane, commented that she deserves a good education.

Ellen Nosal, 152 Main Street, praised the Board of Education and asked that the budget be sent back to the Board of Finance and restored to the original amount.

Ines Venetianer, 17 Berkshire Drive, is concerned by large class sizes and the cuts of elective courses and would like the budget sent back to the Board of Finance.

Alex Herlihy, 41 Ridgeview Drive, a Senior at the High School gave her thanks to all the teachers and would like upcoming classes to have the experiences she has had.

Resident, 13 Mark Twain Drive, commented on the great job of the teachers and would like the Council to consider keeping the teachers.

Derek Johnson, 36 Lakewood Road, provided a handout that will be included with the minutes filed in the Town Clerk's Office. He would like the budget returned to the Board of Finance to reinstate the funds cut.

Steve Archibald, teacher and President of the East Hampton Education Association, commented that the Superintendent's budget was a bare bones budget and the teachers care about the kids in town.

Bob Hein, 19 Birchwood Road, a substitute teacher, said the dollars spent on education are an investment and asked that the budget go back to the Board of Finance with a strong message to restore the budget.

Beth Sheeley, 8 Portage Trail, asked that the budget be restored as proposed by the Board of Education and let the voters decide.

Narcissa Matte, 16 Tammie Ann Drive, asked to let the voters decide on the budget.

New Business

Transmittal of 2018-2019 Budget from Board of Finance

Dr. Richard Brown, Vice Chairman of the Board of Finance presented an overview of each of the categories of the Board of Finance approved budget. A copy of the Board of Finance approved budget will be included with the minutes filed in the Town Clerk's Office.

The Capital Improvement Plan totals \$1,056,706 with a reduction to the Seamster Park Playground down to \$10,000, a reduction to the Sidewalk repairs down to \$20,000 and the elimination of the Police chief vehicle. \$347,500 of the Capital plan is for the Board of Education.

The Town Government budget totals \$15,140,708 which includes capital and debt service. There was a reduction to Library salaries of \$10,000 and a reduction to the Middle Haddam Library of \$5,000. The Town Operating budget individually totals \$10,725,616, which is a \$29,000 increase over the current year.

The Board of Education budget totals \$30,499,668 which is an increase of approximately \$450,000 over the current year.

The Town budget is an increase of 1.1% and a Board of Education increase of 1.5%. The mill rate increase would be 1.7 mills to 33.02.

Dr. Brown asked to consider additional revenue sources of the following:

1. Reinstate the Sears Park passes totaling approximately \$10,000 per year.
2. High School parking passes totaling approximately \$10,000 per year.
3. Set up a foundation for school donations

Discussion and Possible Action on Budget by Town Council

A question was asked about using the fund balance. Mr. Maniscalco indicated that using fund balance is a temporary solution and using it for operating funds is not good practice. In the past it has been used for purchasing one-time capital purchases such as property and vehicles. He and the Finance Director do not recommend using fund balance. Currently the Town has a AAA credit rating which is given for financial health and strong management practices.

Mr. Maniscalco also reported that revenue from the tax sale was used for the current year for the loss in ECS funding.

Mr. Reich indicated that the Board of Finance should request a monthly report on finances from the Board of Education. He also spoke of a Special Education fund that could be considered to be used for the Board of Education deducting that amount as one of the Board of Education cuts.

Mr. Brown noted his concern for the town's seniors and those on fixed incomes. He feels the Board of Finance put forth a budget with all taxpayers in mind not just education.

Mr. Markham is concerned that the budget may be reaching a tipping point particularly in education. Education is a driving factor to improve the grand list in town. He commented on the possible TIF district and that the town needs to grow its business base.

Mr. Philhower thanked the Board of Finance for their budget and noted a concern that a 1.7 mill increase could be voted down. He feels the Board of Finance did their due diligence and the budget can't keep going up as it has.

Ms. Engel agreed with Mr. Brown on the concern for the senior population and also noted that the Council's job is to take care of entire population of the town with those funds coming from only the \$15million dollar portion for the town's budget. She appreciates the concern of the speakers. She also noted that bifurcation is not a straight line to the voters. She feels this the most diligent Board of Finance she has worked with. More money is not necessarily a better education.

Mr. Feegel thanked all the speakers. He noted with works with many young people in the trades and is concerned for the residents, not just the young people. He wishes there didn't need to be cuts but there are other things to consider in Town such as the lake. He feels they need to look out for everyone.

Mr. Piteo spoke of the State of CT cuts. He noted that the Board of Education decides where the funds are spent and that there is an increase over last year's funds. He feels the Board of Finance did a great job and made some hard decisions.

A motion was made by Mr. Philhower, seconded by Mr. Piteo, to approve the 2019-2019 Capital Improvement Plan with a decrease of \$25,000 to the Airline Trail Grant match and a \$25,000 increase to the Seamster Park Playscape project. Voted (7-0)

A motion was made by Mr. Philhower, seconded by Mr. Piteo, to approve the 2018-2019 Town Government Budget proposed by the Board of Finance totaling \$15,140,708.00. Voted (7-0)

A motion was made by Mr. Philhower, seconded by Mr. Piteo, to approve the Board of Education budget as proposed by the Board of Finance totaling \$30,499,668.00. Voted (4-3) Ms. Engel, Mr. Philhower, Mr. Feegel and Mr. Piteo in favor; Mr. Brown, Mr. Markham and Mr. Reich against.

Bids & Contracts

Nexgen System for Computer Aided Dispatch/Records Management

As part of the merger with Glastonbury it had planned to purchase a new CAD RMS system. Glastonbury recently made the decision to make the move to Nexgen. The cost for East Hampton is \$117,000 which we have budgeted in capital.

A motion was made by Mr. Reich, seconded by Mr. Feegel, to purchase a computer aided dispatch system from Nexgen in the amount of \$117,000 off of State contract number CT 04ITZ0006MA. Voted (7-0)

Resolutions/Ordinances/Policies/Proclamations

None

Continued Business

Approval of RFP for 1 Watrous Street

Over the last few months the town has been working on cleaning out and developing an RFP for the sale/re-use of 1 Watrous Street. The RFP has been updated to include a mandatory walk through requirement and a tentative schedule.

A motion was made by Mr. Philhower, seconded by Mr. Reich, to approve the RFP for 1 Watrous Street Sale/Re-Use. Voted (7-0)

Town Manager Report

State Revenue Projections

Mr. Maniscalco spoke to the DOT commissioner who didn't think the legislature was going to make any changes to the budget. He also read some articles that the legislature may not do anything with current budget and would let it go to a deficit. He will keep watching it.

Update on Police Chief Search

Mr. Maniscalco was pleased to announce the hiring of the new Chief of Police, Dennis Woessner. He will start on April 23rd with a swearing in at the Town Council Meeting on April 24th.

Emergency Management Drill

The Town will be participating in an emergency management drill with the State on Saturday, June 16th. The topic of this year's drill has to do with major flooding resulting from a tropical storm.

Mr. Maniscalco will be away the week of April 16th. Jeff Jylkka will be the acting Town Manager.

Jeremy DeCarli presented the TIF district information to Planning & Zoning.

Appointments

None

Tax Refunds

A motion was made by Mr. Philhower, seconded by Mr. Reich, to approve tax refunds in the amount of \$176.71. Voted (7-0)

Public Remarks

Karen Asetta, Business Manager for the Board of Education, commented on a remark from earlier in the meeting that the Board of Education didn't provide the YTD budget expenditures to the Board of Finance. She noted that a request was made by an individual member of the Board of Finance to her, not through the proper channels. She provided the information to the member that requested it. She also noted that there are increases in Special Education occurring this year as well. Lastly, the Board of Education has made the effort to raise funds now by providing Special Education to other towns and charging those towns for the seats.

Karen Johansmeyer, 16 Penny Corner Road, Portland, commented that the fife and drum corps would like to be a part of the growth of the town.

Communications, Correspondence & Announcements

March Board and Commission Summary

The March Board and Commission Summary was provided to Council members.

Adjournment

A motion was made by Mr. Reich, seconded by Mr. Feegel, to adjourn the meeting at 8:25 p.m. Voted (7-0)

Respectfully submitted,

Cathy Sirois
Recording Clerk