

Town of East Hampton
Town Council Regular Meeting
Tuesday, April 26, 2022
Town Hall Council Chambers #107 and via Zoom

MINUTES

Present: Chairman Mark Philhower, Vice Chairman Tim Feegel, Council Members Pete Brown, Brandon Goff, Eric Peterson, Kevin Reich, and Alison Walck and Town Manager David Cox.

Call to Order & Pledge of Allegiance

Chairman Philhower called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. in the Town Hall Council Chambers and via Zoom.

Adoption of Agenda

A motion was made by Ms. Walck, seconded by Mr. Feegel, to adopt the agenda as submitted. Voted (7-0).

Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by Ms. Walck, seconded by Mr. Goff, to approve of the minutes of the Town Council Regular Meeting of April 12, 2022 as written. Voted (7-0)

Public Remarks

Paul Smith, Superintendent of Schools - There is an unprecedented raise in the health insurance to 10.5% for renewals for the 2022/2023 years. He is hoping the budget won't make cuts for the teacher and staff positions. Approximately 280 out of 350 school employees participate in the health insurance. The Board of Education estimated the expense to be only 5% in their budget proposal sent in to the Board of Finance. With the drastic raise to 10.5% the budget would be short \$200,000. At the Board of Education meeting the previous night, Mr. Smith stated that he would review after the open enrollment period. This would resort to ideally reducing the mass specialist paid for the American Rescue Plan funds as necessary. Rather than fund the position for two years it will be reduced to one year with the funds transferring to fund the health insurance increase. He is also asking to reconsider the \$195,000 cut since there may be a solution to the health insurance percentage raise.

Ted Turner, 223 Hog Hill Road, Mr. Turner stated that the Board of Finance sent a lean budget to the Town Council. A lot of items were cut within the budget. He stated that he hopes the proposed lieutenant position in the Police Department won't be cut. Mr. Turner also stated that it would only cost taxpayers \$6 to fund the lieutenant position.

Dennis Woessner, Chief of Police, Mr. Woessner stated no one wants to raise the taxes or the mill rate for the town. The lieutenant position would be an increase of \$25,000. The plan would be to take one of the captains and promote him to the lieutenant position. There would be enough work for the lieutenant to keep them busy each day. Mr. Woessner also mentioned a need for a clear chain of command in the Police Department. If the police chief is out sick or anything else, the next person in charge is the Town Manager. That chain of command problem needs to be addressed.

Kurt Comisky, 62 Wopowog Road, Mr. Comisky is for the new lieutenant position. He stated there needs to be a clear #1 and #2 for a proper chain of command or power structure.

Salvatore Nucifora, 147 Colchester Avenue, Mr. Nucifora stated the 10.5% health insurance increase was completely unexpected. This raise throws everything out of sync. The schools are on track to bring scores and grades up to pre-pandemic levels. He also stated that the Board of Education budget was asked to be increased by \$50,000 rather than decreased.

Nancy Nafis, 16 Daly Road, Ms. Nafis stated that she is for the Board of Education budget. There shouldn't be cuts to that budget, rather it should be voted/ accepted as is by the Town Council.

Paul Wisnieski, Fernwood Drive, Mr. Wisnieski stated he is for the lieutenant position in the Police Department and is against any teacher cuts in the Board of Education budget. He said the class size is up to 30 making the number of teachers stretched thin if cuts were made.

Tania Sones, 17 Curry Lane, Ms. Sones stated she is for the town and Board of Education budgets. She was against the teacher cuts made a couple years ago. Making an extreme cut would cause an uproar.

Emily Cronin, 24 Abbey Road, Ms. Cronin stated she wants no further cuts to the budget and add more money to cover the health insurance percentage raise.

Jennifer Corvo, 72 O'Neil Lane, Ms. Corvo stated she is against any additional cuts to the budget and the budget proposed would be the best for the community.

Presentations

None

Bids & Contracts

None

Resolutions/ Ordinances/ Policies/ Proclamations

- a. **Consideration of an Ordinance Amending Chapter 273 of the Code of the Town of East Hampton Regarding Streets and Sidewalks Concerning Limited Maintenance of Private Roads:** The ordinance was reviewed and redrafted to try to satisfy and appease all residents affected. Mr. Reich wanted to thank the residents of Fern Lane for talking out and standing up for the protection of their road. It was stated that the roads need to be safe for the residents, commuters, Police, Fire, and EMS.

A motion was made by Ms. Walck, seconded by Mr. Peterson, to approve the Ordinance amending Chapter 273 of the Code of the Town of East Hampton regarding streets and sidewalks concerning limited maintenance of private roads as written. Voted (7-0).

Continued Business

- a. **Sub-Committee Reports & Updates**

Mr. Reich reported that there wasn't a meeting held yet for High School Athletic Fields Building Committee. The resurfacing of the track would start next week and would take a

couple weeks. The tennis court will be resurfaced after school ends. The first baseball game of the season will be tomorrow night on the newly renovated field.

Mr. Cox reported on the Water Sub-Committee, they will be meeting in the first week of May. The committee will review the draft of the preliminary report for the state, talk about the progress on testing potential well sites. This is in anticipation of moving into some designs of the water tracks.

b. Consideration & Possible Action on 2022-2023 General Government & Board of Education Budgets and Capital Plan

The Town Council members were able to review the budgets provided by the Board of Finance. The budget submitted has doubled the road repair. New computers and smart boards were provided at the Middle School.

A motion was made by Mr. Goff, seconded by Ms. Walck, to approve the Fiscal Year 2023 Board of Education Budget in the amount of \$34,273,597 as presented by the Board of Finance. Voted (7-0)

A motion was made by Mr. Goff, seconded by Ms. Walck, to approve the Fiscal Year 2023 Town General Government Budget in the amount of \$17,486,368 as presented. Voted (4-3)

A motion was made by Mr. Goff, seconded by Ms. Walck, to approve the motion to use \$500,000 of Unassigned Fund Balance to offset levy needs for Debt Service in Fiscal year 2023. Voted (7-0)

A motion was made by Mr. Goff, seconded by Mr. Feegel, to approve the motion to call the Annual Town Budget Meeting for 6:00pm on Tuesday, May 10 in the Town Hall to be adjourned to referendum vote in accordance with Charter Section 4.1 with the recommended referendum date of Tuesday, May 17. Voted (7-0)

A motion was made by Mr. Goff, seconded by Mr. Feegel, to approve the Fiscal Year 2023 Capital Improvements Plan in the amount of \$1,751,825 which includes a reduction of \$55,000 and elimination of the Sears Park Pickleball Court project. Voted (5-2)

New Business

a. Consideration of a Schedule of Fees and Charges

A list of fees recommended for increases were provided for the meeting. The members will review the list and consider each for voting at the next meeting.

Town Manager's Report

Mr. Cox provided his written report for the Council members which will be included with the minutes filed in the Town Clerk's Office.

Appointments

None

Tax Refunds

A motion was made by Ms. Walck, seconded by Mr. Feegel, to approve the tax refunds in the amount of \$796.76. Voted (7-0)

Public Remarks

Danielle Seretny, 16 Fernwood Drive, Ms. Seretny wanted to thank the Council members for supporting the education budget. She stated the members could show more of a civil discussion while voting on the town budgets.

Kurt Comisky, 62 Wopowog Road, Mr. Comisky stated the Police Department needs a lieutenant structurally and a strong chain of command.

Pam Hatfield, 37 Fern Lane, Ms. Hatfield asked the Council when the assessment work be completed? When will work be on the road?

Communications, Correspondence & Announcements

None

Adjournment

A motion was made by Mr. Goff, seconded by Mr. Feegel, to adjourn the meeting at 7:51pm. Voted (7-0)

Respectfully Submitted,

Katrina Aligata
Recording Clerk