

**TOWN OF EAST HADDAM  
BOARD OF FINANCE**

March 16, 2010  
7:00 pm  
Town Office Annex

**Call to Order**

The Special meeting of the East Haddam Board of Finance was called to order by Chairman Paul Maxwell on Tuesday, March 16, 2010 at 7:00 pm at the Annex. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

In attendance:

Members:

Paul Maxwell, Chairman  
Bob Bennett  
Matthew Budzik  
Bruce Dutch  
Susan Link  
Ed Schwenzfeier

Also in attendance:

Mark B. Walter, First Selectman  
Deb Denette, Town Clerk and BOF recording secretary  
Cindy Varricchio, Finance Administrator  
Fred Thumm, Public Works Director  
Loretta Zdanys, Assessor  
Kelly Marszycki, Rathbun Library Director

**Rathbun Library Request**

The stairs at the Rathbun library are in need of emergency repair. Kelly advised that she received three bids one from a local contractor for a complete renovation of the stairs (\$23,000), two from other contractors to repair the stairs were much lower (\$2,500 range). After much discussion, it was suggested that the Board of Finance could fund a repair (not a complete renovation) from its contingency fund. It was also the preference of the Board of Finance to retain the services of a local contractor. Mr. Dutch encouraged the opportunity of the local contractor to rebid the job as a repair and not a renovation. Ultimately, the following motion entered:

**Motion by Paul Maxwell, seconded by Bob Bennett to authorize the expenditure of up to \$2,500 for repair of the stairs at the Rathbun Library from contingency. The motion carried unanimously.**

**Public Works**

Mr. Thumm stated that the Public Works is basically the same budget as it has been for the past two years, with adjustments for inflation and a competitive market. Mr. Thumm highlighted that there has been a considerable savings with sand purchases. Road maintenance has been prioritized. The implementation of the scale has resulted in a reduction in bulky waste and lower cost as predicted.

Responsive to inquiry from Mr. Bennett, Mr. Thumm stated that it would be advantageous to have more of a presence at the scale house, however, there is no present plan to change practices at this time. Mr. Thumm noted that he would like to lower the grade in front of the containers on the hill to meet the 44" requirement. This would eliminate the need for gates, which are problematic.

Mr. Thumm also stated that being considered for the 2011-2012 budget would be the purchase of our own dump truck and the employ of a licensed CDL operator to deliver waste to Willimantic. Presently East Haddam pays \$136.00 per haul and averages 10 hauls per week. (317 solid waste, 102 bulky waste, 142 recyclables).

Considerable discussion was held regarding the solid waste dumping fee contract, presently with Willimantic Waste. Mr. Thumm stated that Willimantic Waste has offered a two-year extension at \$61.60. (Current rate is \$69.59) and it is his recommendation to accept it. It was noted that CRRA is presently charging \$69.00 and that Preston is charging its member towns \$60.00, however, there would be additional costs for hauling. It was also noted that East Haddam was not a member town. A \$35,000 savings will result due to the lower rate. It was noted that there are not a lot of players to solicit bids from. Mr. Walter stated that Board of Selectmen and Town Meeting are required to enter into a multi-year bid. The item is on the agenda for Board of Selectmen discussion at the March 17<sup>th</sup> meeting.

Mr. Thumm also noted current recyclable practices which take all recyclables and pay the municipalities by the ton when they accept it. Present practice in East Haddam is to sort, pay for some removal, receive payment for others. Mr. Thumm estimated that this practice could save approximately \$40,000 annually.

Mr. Thumm stated that sand is being purchased locally for \$14.00 per yard. This is a \$3.00 per yard savings over prior years. The rate is being held for next year as well. He also noted that one of the plow routes is being handled effectively with a smaller truck at \$125.00 hourly rather than \$165.00 hourly.

Mr. Thumm noted that a 10-year old sweeper was purchased by the town to replace one from 1987 and another from 1993. One of the older sweepers will be retired; however, it appears as though the 1987 model may be in better shape than the 1993 model. Mr. Bennett inquired if there was any excess equipment that could be auctioned. Mr. Thumm stated that a spring auction is anticipated.

### **Assessor**

Mrs. Zdanys stated that she received a phone call Sunday evening that informed her of an article that appeared in *The Middletown Press* stating that her position was being reduced to 20 hours, she stated that was the first that she heard of it. She presented a letter to the Board of Finance citing the need for the position to remain full time. Mrs. Zdanys apologized that she could not stay, but added that she received a phone call that her son had broken down on I-95.

Mr. Walter stated that he did in fact sit down with Mrs. Zdanys and advised her that the Selectmen's budget would bring forth the recommendation that the Assessor position be reduced to part time. Mr. Bennett suggested that an executive session would be necessary for the next meeting. Mr. Schwenzfeier stated that he felt that it was necessary to separate the budget from personnel issues.

Mr. Budzik inquired if there was any thought at the Selectmen level to reduce the assistant or the assistant's hours rather than that of the Assessor. Mr. Walter responded that the assistant is the primary face for the Town's assessment department and added that further discussion would need to be held in executive session or if the employee chose, in public session with the employee present

### **Follow up items**

Assessor Mapping Expenditures: Mrs. Link had inquired about the Assessor mapping expenditures, it was noted that Quality Data updates the lines and boundaries quarterly. Mrs. Denette added that the updates are necessary to reflect changes in ownership and boundary lines that are recorded in the Town Clerk's Office.

Elections/Registrars: The conference fees were noted to be essential for both the Registrars and Deputies for learning sessions. The overnight accommodations were noted to be of concern by various members.

Probate Court: Regionalization brings different fee components. The grand list is the determining factor for cost allocation.

Tax Collector: Discussion regarding wages was held. A wage chart prepared in early 2007 was provided for the Board; which included updating to reflect annual increases. Responsive to inquiry the chart was noted to have been developed pursuant to a study conducted at the time. Mr. Budzik noted that the study was the best effort at the time to assure fair and equitable compensation among municipal employees and to keep East Haddam competitive so that it could retain quality personnel.

Mr. Schwenzfeier stated that the chart, broken down into hours worked 30, 35 and 40 made no sense for elected personnel. He stated that an elected person should be charged with doing whatever is necessary to carry out the duties of the position and that hours should not factor into it. Mrs. Varricchio relayed a suggestion of Linda Zemienieski that in an off election year the Board should consider establishing a starting salary for newly elected personnel at the beginning of a step. She noted that presently, anyone running for office is running with the expectation that the salary offered is that which is presently being paid.

The following expiration dates of union contracts were noted:

Clerical	6/30/2011
Firefighter	6/30/2011
Police	TBD
Teamsters	6/30/2012
Transfer Station	6/30/2012

Review of anticipated revenue for 2010-2011.

Pages 8 and 9 of the proposed budget were reviewed.

State and federal income will be less. Highlighted items were casino funds and education grants which combined will generate \$25,000+ less income in the next fiscal year. Investment income is not tracking as well as it did last year. Other revenue sources were reviewed, the

building department anticipates less revenue. Mrs. Denette stated that her projection for conveyance tax assumes that the legislature will not let the present rate sunset.

Mrs. Varricchio noted that the increase is revenue from the Town Clerk surcharge (PA-09-228) is pass through funds collected for the State. Mrs. Varricchio stated that the prepared budget assumes a 99.5% collection rate.

Mrs. Varricchio stated that the town has an ordinance that it will not issue a building permit on a property owing back taxes. She stated that due to the ordinance \$22,000 in back taxes was collected earlier today. She reported that the tax department was very pleased.

Mrs. Varricchio stated that she hoped to have oil prices locked in for the next meeting.

**Mr. Dutch motioned to adjourn at 8:31 pm. Mr. Bennett seconded the motion. The motion to adjourn carried unanimously.**

Respectfully submitted,

Deb Denette