

**TOWN OF EAST HADDAM  
BOARD OF FINANCE  
Special Meeting  
March 14, 2013  
Grange Hall**

**CALL TO ORDER**

The special meeting of the East Haddam Board of Finance was called to order by Chairman Susan Link on Thursday, March 14, 2013 at 7:00 pm at the Grange Hall.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

In attendance:

Board of Finance Members:

Susan Link, Chairman  
Robert Bennett  
Daniel Alexander  
Bruce Dutch  
Harvey Thomas  
Raymond Willis

Others:

Mark B. Walter, First Selectman  
Emmett Lyman, Selectman  
Cindy Varricchio, Finance Director  
Denise Dill, Tax Collector  
Dr. Mary Beth Iacobelli, Superintendent of schools  
Bryan Perry, Secretary Board of Education  
Deb Fiala, Board of Education  
Elizabeth Lunt, Public Works Administrator  
Sam Guy, Lakes Association  
Gail Grzegorzczak, Lakes Association  
Jeffrey Rhoades, Resident State Trooper  
Craig Mansfield, East Haddam Police

**2013-2014 PROPOSED BUDGET**

**Board of Education Overview**

Superintendent of Schools Dr. Mary Beth Iacobelli and Board of Education Finance Subcommittee Chair Deb Fiala reviewed the proposed Board of Education budget. Dr. Iacobelli stated that the budget document is user friendly and transparent. Dr. Iacobelli stated that the budget process included a comprehensive review, from administrators reviewing with their staffing and she and Finance Director Cindy Varricchio meeting with the administrators. Administrators were requested to develop their budget using the zero-based budget approach.

Mrs. Fiala indicated that the Finance Subcommittee reviewed the budget and made adjustments; and the Board reviewed the budget and agreed that the budget reflects what is necessary for the district. Mrs. Fiala reported that there are savings from the result of the

diesel and oil bid response and that we are hoping for health insurance savings when the request for proposal process is completed. Mrs. Fiala stated that Dr. Iacobelli and Mrs. Varricchio did a good job in preparing the budget and there is no "fluff". Mrs. Fiala informed the Board that five year averages were used in the budget request to reflecting "truth in budgeting".

Chairman Susan Link inquired about the declining enrollment of 43 students and asked if there was a corresponding reduction in teachers. Dr. Iacobelli responded that the budget calls for one less third grade teacher with the addition of a World Language teacher at the middle school. Dr. Iacobelli stated that we need to "feed" the AP courses at the high school. Mrs. Fiala indicated that that position was eliminated during a budget year that there was no budget increase, and that is now causing an issue at the high school.

First Selectman Mark Walter indicated that he had heard a rumor that AP classes were being eliminated. Dr. Iacobelli responded that we are not eliminating and that we are adding AP classes. There was a question with regard to class sizes. Dr. Iacobelli responded that the Board of Education policy is for 22 per class and that they try to adhere to that at the elementary and middle schools. High school classes can vary by subject from six students in Spanish or French 4 to 32 students in advanced algebra.

Harvey Thomas inquired about future Vo-Ag and technical education at the high school. Dr. Iacobelli responded that the interest is very high and that if we had more teachers we could fill more classes; adding that we have the space but not the staffing. Mr. Thomas clarified that there is no desire to decrease the programming. Dr. Iacobelli stated that there is not. Mr. Thomas asked whether or not with the implementation of a shared IT department there would be reductions in instructional staff to accomplish. Dr. Iacobelli answered no.

Mrs. Fiala reviewed reductions to grant receipts and increased unfunded mandates that impact the Board such as magnet school tuition that the Board is required to pay.

### **Public Works**

Public Works Administrator Beth Lunt reviewed the Public Works budget with the Board. There was discussion with regard to the sign budget and it was noted that with the proposed street naming, there would be a need for many new street signs. Mrs. Lunt stated that there is a request for \$15,000 to repair the Transfer Station hopper.

Daniel Alexander inquired of Mrs. Lunt the impact to the Public Works staffing when they provide assistance to other departments and Boards and Commissions for items such as in kind services for grants. Mrs. Lunt responded that they fit in the best that they can. Mrs. Lunt noted that Public Works Superintendent Richard Toolan does much of that work adding that as long as it is an average year they are willing to assist with in kind services. First Selectman Walter noted that there is a process to coordinate through Mrs. Lunt.

The capital projects budget was reviewed including the road program. Mrs. Lunt explained that the road program rates roads with zero being the worst and 100 the best, noting that our average is 63. Our roads are adequate and their ratings increase every year. Mr. Lunt explained that they combine the road program information along with traffic volumes when prioritizing road repair and maintenance. Chairman Link asked about O'Connell Road Extension and its status. Mrs. Lunt responded that there is an engineering study being done and that she will have more information when that is completed.

Mrs. Lunt stated that there is a new capital request this year for a tractor flail mower. They were able to refurbish the loader for the tanyard and push out further on the capital schedule allowing them to prioritize the need for a flail mower. Mrs. Lunt reported that the current mower was in for repair much of last summer and that a contractor for 72 hours of roadside mowing cost approximately \$8,000. Mrs. Lunt noted that there are liabilities to the town with extensive growth. Robert Bennett asked if there were other uses for the tractor. Mrs. Lunt responded that there are not. Mr. Alexander asked if we had adequate staffing to operate. Mrs. Lunt indicated that the entire crew is trained in its use. It was noted that we cannot rent a flail mower.

Chairman Link asked about the mini-excavator and how frequently it is used. Mrs. Lunt answered at least once a week. There is a request for a new well at the Transfer Station, which also services the Dog Pound. We have installed a treatment system; but it does not meet health code standards. There was discussion with regard to the revenue generated at the Transfer Station and that the Transfer Station is used by residents and commercial enterprises free of charge. There was discussion regarding whether we should reevaluate how we do things.

### **Lakes Association**

Sam Guy and Gail Grzegorzczak reviewed the budget requests for the three Lakes Associations. There was discussion with regard to funding for invasive plants, spot treatments and education for those living along the lakes.

### **Police**

Resident Trooper Jeffrey Rhoades and Corporal Craig Mansfield presented the police budget. They reviewed the need for clerical staffing and their budget requested for a shared position with Parks and Recreation. Trooper Rhoades informed the Board that beginning in January 2014 calls to the State Police will not be going to Troop K in Colchester, they will be going to Troop C in Tolland. They need a clerical staff person to greet guests, take messages and do other administrative tasks that presently fall on the officers. There is also a concern that if they are in the office doing administrative tasks they are not out patrolling. The addition of two full-time officers and the offsetting reduction of one Resident State Trooper were reviewed with the Board. Daniel Alexander asked about what expanded police coverage would mean for the Town. Trooper Rhoades responded that there would be two full-time officers staffing during the day Monday through Friday and in the evening the Resident State Trooper and a part-time police officer. Weekends would be staffed by part-time officers. The capital budget was reviewed noting that the request for a Chevy Tahoe has been moved out one year to add an additional cruiser.

**Motion was made by Robert Bennett to adjourn at 9:10 pm. Daniel Alexander seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved. Motion carried.**

Respectfully submitted

Cindy Varricchio  
Acting Clerk