

TOWN OF EAST HADDAM
BOARD OF FINANCE
Regular Meeting
December 8, 2014
Town Grange

The December regular meeting of the East Haddam Board of Finance was called to order at 7:00 pm by Chairman Susan Link.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

In attendance:

Board of Finance Members:
Susan Link, Chairman
Robert Bennett, Secretary
Bruce Dutch
Raymond Willis

Others:
Mark B. Walter, First Selectman
Deb Denette, Town Clerk and recording secretary
Jim Ventres, Land Use Administrator
Bob Casner
Arlene Govang
Ed Gubbins
Jay Moreau
Joanne Rocznik
Andrea Skwarek

CORRESPONDENCE

Mrs. Link reviewed a letter from the Hale Ray Alumni Association regarding the mural located at the old middle school/high school. In anticipation of either demolition to or rehabilitation of the facility, the mural which was painted by W. Langdon Keene as part of a WPA project should be preserved as a town treasure. As the painting is adhered to the wall, the proposal is to fashion a frame and cut the wall out with the picture now framed so that it can be moved and stored. The Historical Society has agreed to house the painting until a permanent home is obtained. Rough estimates are for approximately \$30,000 to accomplish the task. Mrs. Link requested hard numbers. Mr. Casner stated that the cost estimates needed would be for a preservationist, structural engineer and equipment.

Mr. Willis inquired why this would be an expense that the own should bear. Mrs. Rocznik replied that it is town property. Debate ensued regarding the actual value of the rendering, including that of sentimental value. Mrs. Skwarek reviewed the biography of the artist, it was also noted that the mural depicted Nathan Hale. Mr. Walter stated that the Board of Finance could determine whether to pay for the costs from a special appropriation or from its contingency. Mrs. Link again requested firm quotes. Mrs. Link solicited the members as to whether they would support this initiative prior to the undertaking to obtain firm quotes. Mr. Willis noted that he was neutral on the subject, all other members indicated initial support provided costs did not exceed projections.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

a. **Tax Collector's Report—October 2014:**

No comments or questions were raised.

b. **2015-2016 Board of Finance Budget Request:**

The 2015-2016 Board of Finance budget request was reviewed, no figures were provided. Mrs. Link requested feedback with what the Board wanted to do with contingency in the next fiscal year. No determination was reached.

c. **2015 Board of Finance Meeting Schedule:**

Motion was made by Mr. Willis motioned to approve the 2015 Board of Finance meeting schedule. Regular meetings to be held at the Grange Hall at 7:00 pm on the following dates.

January 12

February 9

March 9

April 13

May 11

June 8

July 13

August 10

September 14

October 19

November 9

December 14

January 11, 2016

Mr. Dutch seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved. Motion carried.

FIRST SELECTMAN'S REPORT

a. **Shared Services Report:**

Mr. Walter reported that the electric supplier has been changed, the rate has been locked in for one year at a .1035 rate.

Mr. Walter stated that some costs savings may be experienced next year due to solar initiatives.

Mr. Walter advised that the police union contract has been settled. The clerical union settled earlier in the fall. The firefighters union is now in process.

He also advised that he has been working with the friends of Harris. Some agreed upon goals have been worked out. He reported that the kitchen is out, a storage facility would be located at the public works garage and a small storage shed would be on the property. Mr. Walter stated that he is hopeful that the grant can be amended. Other field improvements are being recommended. Mr. Walter stated that the Economic Developer Coordinator is working with a private citizen that may have interest in developing an incubator/commercial kitchen. He also reported that the

Captain Comer memorial area is being spruced up. Mr. Bennett suggested that if another project goes forward, that different terminology be utilized. He stated that an incubator kitchen would be less controversial than a commercial kitchen although they may in fact be the same thing.

FINANCE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

a. **2013-2014 Audit Report:**

Mrs. Link stated that the audit report has been received. Two management recommendations were received. The first was regarding the Tax Collector's office due to the absence of support staff. Mr. Walter stated that he has been negotiating with the clerical union so that the Assessor's Assistant can provide that service. He stated that there will be a need to modify the offices; the second audit recommendation was regarding purchase orders, which will be addressed by the implementation of MUNIS.

b. **2013-2014 Annual Report:**

The Board of Finance portion of the annual report was presented for review. There were no comments.

c. **October YTD Budget Report:**

The October year-to-date reports were presented. Mr. Walter advised that the Town has locked in for sand and that the price increased substantially.

d. **2015-2016 Budget Calendar:**

The 2015-2016 budget calendar—will be done next month.

LIAISON REPORTS

Mr. Bennett stated that the State is again working on the radio towers on Mount Parnassus Road and it may be necessary to allocate funds as early as January. He stated that this item should be on the agenda for next month.

Mrs. Link stated that she attended the Board of Education forum where it discussed its goals and objectives. It was reported to have been a well-attended meeting (shy of 100 attendees). Mrs. Link stated that the Superintendent recognizes that the schools need to work within the budget that they have. Wish list items included football and track. A five-year strategic goal forum will be held on December 10, 2014. She encouraged attendance.

Mr. Willis inquired about the status of the old middle school renovations. Mr. Walter reported that a critical meeting will be held on Wednesday. He stated that the town would be receiving a firm quote regarding PCB removal at the old middle school, he also stated that a better clarification is needed on the quotes. Mrs. Link inquired as to which Board of Finance member was the liaison to the Municipal Facilities Building Advisory Group. Mr. Willis stated that he believed that he was, however, he has never been advised of a meeting.

GUESTS AND AUDIENCE COMMENTS

Jay Moreau stated that the Ambulance Association will fund the purchase of a care free garage to house an emergency response vehicle. It was noted that the Public Works department cleared the area today in preparation for the structure.

Mr. Moreau advised that the Ambulance Association has a new chief. Steve Dorfmann.

OLD BUSINESS

a. **Open Space Grant Award:**

Mr. Ventres advised that he presented the opportunity to apply last spring regarding the following two parcels:

- 1) Lena property—Tater Hill and Babcock road
- 2) Zeleznicky property—Sarah Baker Road

He stated that it is the highest grant award ever given to the town, noting that the Town would receive a 65% contribution toward the purchase of these open space parcels. Mr. Ventres reviewed the benefit to the town's existing open space and the final costs to the town. Responsive to inquiry from Mrs. Link, Mr. Ventres advised that typically the town would go to referendum when it expends over \$500,000 for open space. He stated that both of these parcels total \$329,000. He also stated that if both parcels are authorized there is still approximately \$1,000,000 available from the bond authorization. Next steps were noted to be approval from the Boards of Selectmen and Finance to move forward to Town Meeting and referendum. Bond Counsel will need to review and prepare that appropriate documentation should the Boards choose to move forward.

NEW BUSINESS

a. **STEAP Grant Transfer Station Application Authorization:**

Mr. Walter stated that Public Works has applied to the State for a STEAP grant to for upgrades to bring the Transfer Station up to DEEP compliance. Mrs. Link sought assurances that the town will not come back and ask for additional funds to complete the project once it starts. Mr. Walter stated that it will not and would downscale the project if necessary.

Motion was made by Mr. Bennett to authorize Public Works to apply for a STEAP grant in the amount of \$500,000 for the Transfer Station. Mr. Dutch seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved. Motion carried.

b. **Unified Chart of Accounts Grants Program Application Authorization:**

A grant has been made available for the implementation of the Unified Chart of Accounts. East Haddam had already done this for the town and Board of Education with MUNIS and we would like to apply for grant funding.

Motion was made by Mr. Bennett to authorize the Finance Department to apply for the Unified Chart of Accounts Grants program in the amount of \$30,000. Mr. Dutch seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved. Motion carried.

a. Library Special Revenue Fund:

Mr. Walter was uncertain whether this agenda item was regarding the creation of a unified friends group or whether it was intended to create a mechanism that would allow the donor to specify where the donation would be applied. It was determined no action was necessary at this time. Mr. Walter added that complete ownership of the East Haddam Free Library and Reading Room Association has not been accomplished and we either own the building or the books, but not both.

Motion was made by Mr. Dutch to adjourn at 8:00 pm. Mr. Willis seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted

Deb Denette