

TOWN OF EAST HADDAM
Board of Finance
Regular Meeting
December 14, 2015
Grange Hall

The regular meeting of the East Haddam Board of Finance was called to order at 7:00 pm by Chairman Raymond Willis,

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

In attendance:

Board of Finance Members:

Raymond Willis, Chairman
Robert Bennett, Secretary
William DiCristofaro
Bruce Dutch
Gregory Lauria
Harvey Thomas

Others:

Mark Walter, First Selectman (arrived 7:35)
Susan Link, Selectman
Deb Denette, Town Clerk and recording secretary
Denise Dill, Tax Collector
Bryan Perry, Chairman Board of Education
Beth Lunt, Public Works Administrator
Peter Simmons, Economic Development Coordinator (former)
Cindy Varricchio, Finance Director
Erik Dill
Chris Reed
Jay Moreau
John Matthews

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mr. Willis stated that he would like to add to the agenda an item regarding discussion of a plow truck for Public Works following the Chairman's Report.

Motion by was made by Mr. Dutch to approve the agenda as amended. Mr. Bennett seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved. Motion carried.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion was made by Mr. Bennett to accept the regular meeting minutes of November 9, 2015 as amended by Mr. Willis to correct a typo on the last page "late" to "lake" regarding Phase Two Project to eradicate a control Fanwort and Variable Milfoil. Mr. Bennett seconded the motion. The motion carried with Mr. Dutch abstaining.

CORRESPONDENCE

Mrs. Varricchio reported that the Connecticut Conference of Municipalities is offering training regarding budget preparation. She stated that she would forward the information via email and she requested that Board members interested in attending let her know.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

a. Tax Collector's October Report:

Mrs. Dill reported that she is 1/3 of a percent ahead in collections compared to the same time last year.

b. 2016 Meeting Schedule:

Mr. Willis noted that the meeting schedule proposed for the 2016 year was enclosed in the materials presented. The meetings are set for the second Monday of each month, with the exception of October. Mr. Willis stated that he would like to have discussion regarding moving the meeting time to 4:00 pm.

Mr. Dutch motioned to approve the schedule as presented convening each meeting at 4:00 pm. Mr. Bennett seconded the motion.

Discussion: Mr. DiCristofaro stated that he believed that a 4:00 pm start would be perceived as non-transparent as it would hinder a working person's ability to attend meetings. It was noted that the senior population do not come to meetings because of the late hour. Mr. Walter advised that the Board of Selectmen is working on arranging the ability to televise meetings through Comcast Cable and the school.

Mr. Willis called for a vote on the motion adopting the meeting schedule with a 4:00 pm start time. The motion unanimously failed.

Motion was made by Mr. Thomas to approve the schedule as presented convening each meeting at 7:00 pm. Mr. Bennett seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved. Motion carried.

c. 2016-2017 Budget Process:

Mr. Willis stated that he would like to pare down and simplify the budget process. He stated that he would like to meet with the Board of Selectmen, the Board of Education and Shared Services. He stated that each group should be able to speak to the budget requests. It was noted that the planned date for the referendum on the budget is May 17, 2016, the annual town meeting to send the budget to referendum is May 3, 2016 and the public hearing on the budget is April 9, 2016. The budget will be presented to the Board of Finance at its regular meeting on March 14, 2016.

Mrs. Varricchio stated that the presidential preference primary will be held the end of April and that it was factored in with discussions with both the Registrars and the Town Clerk when setting the referendum date. Workshops still need to be established. (Special Meetings).

Motion was made by Mr. DiCristofaro to approve the schedule for the budget process, Mr. Dutch seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved. Motion carried.

d. 2016-2017 Budget Policy:

Mr. Willis stated that a budget policy was followed in the past. He inquired if there were any changes to it. Mr. DiCristofaro stated that he felt that the policy is a subset of the financial plan and felt that the two should be tied together.

e. Board of Finance Liaison Discussion:

Mr. Willis stated that over the past three years there were very few liaison discussions and that he believed changes to the process were necessary. He suggested that each of the four projects needed a liaison, however, he questioned the need for the others. Mr. Thomas sought clarification that Mr. Willis was suggesting that the policy of a liaisons be abandoned. Mr. DiCristofaro suggested that the process not be abandoned, but that assignments be streamlined. It was noted, for example, that Mrs. Lunt has two liaisons, one for Public Works and the other for the Transfer Station. The need to keep communications open was emphasized. Mr. Willis suggested that the Board consider how the process could be improved and asked the Board to be prepared for further discussion in January.

f. Board of Finance Rules:

The Board of Finance Rules were presented at the last meeting. There were no comments, questions, additions or deletions suggested.

g. Financial Policies:

The policy is in draft form and is rather lengthy. Mr. Willis suggested that he would like two members to review it and make recommendations to the Board. Mr. DiCristofaro and Mr. Thomas were each volunteered/chosen to work on the financial policies.

Public Works (Dump/Plow Truck):

Mrs. Lunt stated that the 2015-2016 budget included funds to replace an existing dump truck that is utilized for plowing. She stated that the truck is utilized on the route of Cherry Swamp, Great Hillwood and Powerhouse Road. She stated that the budget included funds for a two-wheel drive vehicle, however, the driver has requested that a four-wheel drive vehicle be purchased because of the hills on the route. She noted that the cost differential is \$15,859. She requested that the Board of Finance authorize the expenditure over and above what was budgeted. She provided photos evidencing town plows off the road on the route.

Discussion was held as to where the shortage would come from. Mrs. Lunt will endeavor to find the funds from within her budget, however, depending upon the number of storm events that occur this winter, this could become problematic. The Board of Finance's Contingency Fund was also identified. Mrs. Varricchio stated that she can keep the amount on the Board of Finance's watch list as a potential overage for Contingency funding and Mrs. Lunt could go forward with the intent of finding the funds from within her budget if plausible.

Motion by Mr. Bennett to recommend that Public Works work to find from within their budget the \$15,869 for the additional cost to purchase a four wheel drive dump truck, a change from the two wheel drive dump truck budgeted. It was noted that should the winter have significant storm events, that contingency funds, in the amount not to

exceed \$16,000 will need to be available. Mr. Dutch seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved. Motion carried.

FIRST SELECTMAN'S REPORT

Mr. Walter reported as follows:

- The dock is in and nearing completion in time to come out for the winter. He stated that all that remains is the handicap access. He stated that it will be a great addition next year.
- Two contract lawyers have been retained to work on the four capital projects. He stated that working with attorneys from the beginning of the project should avoid problems as the projects progress. (One attorney had a conflict with a project necessitating the need for two).
- Written notice has been given to KX that East Haddam will be migrating to Valley Shore for emergency radio services; the new tower is under construction.
- State analysis of the swing bridge is underway in anticipation of a renovation project.

a. Shared Services Report:

The written Shared Services Report was presented, Mr. Walter stated that he would be pleased to answer any questions regarding it. Focus has been on preventative maintenance and sprucing up.

Finance Director's Report:

a. 2014-2015 Annual Report:

Mrs. Varricchio presented a draft of the 2014-2015 Annual Report. She stated that the document will go to the printer later in the week. She solicited edits prior to that date. The financial piece was reviewed. Complimentary comments were received. Mr. DiCristofaro suggested a foot note be placed on the financial summary under F6 for clarity.

Motion was made by Mr. Bennett to approve the 2014-2015 Annual Report subject to proofreading and to request the Board of Selectmen to schedule a Town Meeting for adoption. Mr. DiCristofaro seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved. Motion carried.

LIAISON REPORTS

Nothing noted.

GUESTS AND AUDIENCE

Nothing noted.

OLD BUSINESS

Nothing noted.

NEW BUSINESS

a. **Tax and Business Incentive Application (385 Town Street LLC):**

Mr. Simmons was present to review the request from New England Propeller under the Tax and Business Incentive Program. Mr. Willis stated that the process is the same as was recently reviewed and approved for Eddie's Autobody. He stated that it was not necessary to have another presentation. He inquired if any Board members had questions of Mr. Simmons. Hearing none, he called for action.

Motion was made by Mr. DiCristofaro to approve the tax abatement request of 385 Town Street LLC (aka New England Propeller Service, Inc.) and to request that the Board of Selectmen schedule a Town Meeting for approval. Mr. Lauria seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved. Motion carried.

It was noted that Dutch properties has also made application under the program and that application will be coming forward shortly.

b. **Gift Acceptance—Heritage Park Flagpole:**

A donation was made by Bruce Dutch of a flagpole in memory of his mother at the Heritage Park located at the Senior Center.

Motion was made by Mr. Thomas to accept the gift of a flagpole, accessories and labor for Heritage Park valued at \$1,302.08 from Dutch Oil Co, Inc. and to request that the Board of Selectmen schedule a Town Meeting for approval. Mr. Bennett seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved. Motion carried.

OTHER

Mr. Thomas suggested that prior to the budget process getting into full swing that the Board have discussion regarding where it wants the budget to fall, in other words, it should establish targets or goals and endeavor to meet them. Mr. DiCristofaro stated that he liked the goal but inquired how to quantify it. Mr. Willis stated that the challenge is to present a budget that he thinks the townspeople will approve. Mr. Thomas suggested that for the Board of Education a formula approach would make sense, he stated that there are more challenges on the general government side, however, he stated that breaking it up into contractual needs vs. wants would be beneficial.

Mr. Willis called for a motion to adjourn. Motion was made by Mr. Thomas to adjourn at 7:50 pm. Mr. Dutch seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Deb Denette
Recording Secretary