

TOWN OF EAST HADDAM

Board of Finance

Regular Meeting

August 8, 2016

Grange Hall

The regular meeting of the East Haddam Board of Finance was called to order at 7:00 pm by Secretary Robert Bennett at the Grange Hall.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited. Mr. Bennett noted that he had a card for Board members to sign for Chairman Raymond. Willis who was recovering from a recent surgery.

In attendance:

Board of Finance Members:

Robert Bennet, Secretary

Bruce Dutch

William DiCristofaro

Greg Lauria

Harvey Thomas (arrived 7:12 pm)

Other in attendance:

Emmett Lyman, First Selectman

Deb Denette, Town Clerk and Recording Secretary

Denise Dill, Tax Collector

Ronald Turner, Operations Director

Cindy Varricchio, Finance Director

Theresa and Charles Dickinson

Erik Dill

Randy Miller and Felicia Tenzca

Jay Moreau

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion was made by Mr. Dutch to approve the minutes of the June 13, 2016 regular meeting as presented. Mr. DiCristofaro seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved. Motion carried.

CORRESPONDENCE

a. **Letter from Superintendent of Schools—2015-2016 Budget Results:**

Mr. Bennett called the Board's attention to a letter from the East Haddam Public Schools advising that \$13,420.90 was unexpended at the end of FY 2015-2016. A request for transfer of the funds to the Board of Education Capital Reserve Fund following the audit was made. Mrs. Varricchio advised that no action was necessary at this time.

b. Invitation form East Haddam Library's System—September 24, 2016 Open House:

Mr. Bennett advised of an invitation from the East Haddam Library System to attend their open house which is scheduled for Saturday September 24th from 9 am to 1 pm.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

a. Tax Collector's Report:

No questions were raised. It was noted that collections are going very well.

FIRST SELECTMAN'S REPORT

a. Shared Services Report:

Mr. Lyman requested Ron Turner, the Operations Director to provide an update on the four projects. Mr. Turner advised the Board that the elementary school renovations are on target. The asbestos abatement has been completed and the plumbing is done. The new black top will be installed shortly. It was noted that financial tracking for each of the projects will be included monthly at the request of Chairman Willis.

The Shared Services report was presented. Mrs. Varricchio reported that staff is working on the annual report. It was also noted that East Haddam is partnering with East Hampton schools for student food services.

Mr. DiCristofaro inquired about the Munis system. Mrs. Varricchio advised that the HR module is being populated and employees will soon be able to access their pay records and W-2s. The goal is to implement employee self-service options for both school and town employees.

Mr. Lyman advised that CIRMA has refunded \$15,371 to the Town as equity distribution and risk management. He also advised that conversations have begun to effectuate better handicap access for both libraries. He stated that a small cities grant may be a suitable funding vehicle for this. He stated that it will be a while before it can come to fruition.

Mr. Thomas arrived at this time.

b. Grant Application with Middlesex Hospital for Paramedic Services:

Mr. Lyman stated that the Board of Selectmen have opted to move forward with an Agreement with Middlesex Hospital for licensed paramedic services 24/7. This program was funded previously by the State and as the State has discontinued its funding the cost is falling to municipalities. For the first year the cost will be \$1.00 per citizen (9,126) per last completed census. Each year it will increase by \$1.00 per citizen per year with a cap at \$5.00 per citizen. Mr. Lyman stated that the agreement is for year one only. He advised that the Regional Council of Governments is working on a regional option that will hopefully provide relief. Mr. Lyman stated that he believed the Town had no choice and that this was necessary to assure paramedic services.

Mr. Bennett invited the audience to comment:

Jay Moreau spoke in favor of the Agreement.

Charles Dickinson questioned what type of billing our residents would receive and whether out of town residents would be covered because they received services in our Town. He was advised that it was reciprocal. It was also noted that ambulance costs are separate from paramedic costs. The call process was also reviewed, it was noted to occur from dispatch as to whether there were issues that would require advanced life support.

Rob Smith arrived during this discussion.

Theresa Dickinson noted that over a five year period the costs would total \$135,000, she inquired if these costs could be billed to or through the ambulance. Mr. Lyman clarified that the cost at this time is \$9,000, he emphasized that additional negotiations will occur.

Mr. Smith recognized that these fees are because the State cut of its funding and it is expected that towns will step up. He raised concern about the additional burden on the taxpayers. He also questioned that if \$1.00 per citizen would be sufficient in year one, why would it be anticipated that it needed to go up five times. He expressed his belief that a realistic assessment should occur and hold.

Mr. Lyman reiterated that right now the town is under the gun and that to assure the safety of our residents he encouraged this agreement to be signed through June 30, 2017. He recognized a need for additional negotiation and he was confident that the Regional Council of Governments has the matter in hand.

Mr. Thomas inquired what would happen if the Board of Finance declined to approve the \$9,126 appropriation. Mr. Lyman stated that the service would remain, however, individuals needing the service would be billed between \$1,500 and \$3,000. Again, Mr. Lyman reiterated that this became necessary because the State withdrew its funding.

Mr. Dutch opined that we needed to proceed with this and do better in negotiations next year. Mr. DiCristofaro also questioned the step increases. He stated that if \$9,000 is enough, and asked why they will need \$45,000 in five years?

Mr. Lauria stated that as a former firefighter, he sees the value of paramedic services and stated that he was supportive.

Mrs. Dickinson raised concern that our residents would not know that this was a covered service and many may be billed anyway. Mr. Moreau advised that there may still be a bill, however, it would be greatly reduced if there was an agreement in place.

Motion was made by Mr. Dutch to make a special appropriation in the amount of \$9,126 for Middlesex Hospital Paramedic Services for the period of July 1, 2016 to June 30, 2017 said appropriation account 10542090-53010. Mr. Lauria seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved. Motion carried.

FINANCE DIRECTORS REPORT

a. Major Capital Projects Update:

Mrs. Varricchio reiterated that staff is working on 2015-2016 annual report submissions.

A report containing status of and budget summary for each of the following projects was briefly reviewed:

Municipal Facilities Project, East Haddam Elementary School Renovations Project; Town Wide Radio Project; and Firehouse Renovations Project. It was noted that the Municipal Facilities Project has a meeting on Thursday at 7:00 pm at the Grange Hall and is expected to finalize the office layout.

Mr. Thomas inquired if the elementary school will be ready for opening. Mr. Turner advised that it will be. He also inquired what impact/delay working with USDA has added to the municipal facilities project. He inquired if there was any sense of when the shovels might hit the ground. Mr. Turner stated that he would defer that question to Mr. Mansfield who chairs the Committee.

Mr. Lyman added that the State has finally begun working at the Mt. Parnassus site (for the town-wide radio project). He noted frequencies are hard to come by. He noted the importance of the project.

LIAISON REPORTS

Nothing noted.

GUESTS AND AUDIENCE

Mr. Moreau thanked the Board for approving the paramedic agreement. He noted that it guarantees trained medical personnel will respond when dispatched.

OLD BUSINESS

Mr. Thomas noted that the Board of Education invited the Board of Finance to sit down with them at the onset of teacher negotiations. He noted that the meeting fell through, although he stated that it was a very welcome gesture. He inquired if there were any plans for rescheduling?

NEW BUSINESS

a. Lakes Association Request—Transfer of Funds Between Lakes:

There was \$2,988 remaining in the 2015-2016 budget for the Lakes Association. Both Bashan Lake and Lake Hayward had qualifying expenses and have requested that the unexpended funds be utilized to pay those expenses. Mr. Thomas added that going forward the Lakes Association would anticipate that each lake (Hayward, Bashan and Moodus Reservoir) will be allocated one-third of the town's budgeted lake funding. Any unused funds will be split 50/50 between the two remaining lakes if they have qualifying eligible expenses to make the match and it is approved by the Board. If there is only one lake with qualifying eligible expenses, that lake would receive the balance of the unused funding with Board of Finance approval. Mr. Thomas stated that he would not be voting because he lives on Lake Hayward.

Motion made by Mr. DiCristofaro to allocate the remaining Moodus Reservoir funds in the amount of \$2,988 equally (\$1,494 each) to Bashan Lake and Lake Hayward. Mr. Dutch seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved. Motion carried.

b. Grant Application Request—Historic Document Preservation Program:

Mr. Bennett invited Mrs. Denette to speak on this request.

Mrs. Denette noted that she wishes to take advantage of the grant funds and purchase an additional map cabinet. She noted that last year a map cabinet was also purchased with grant funds which alleviated over-crowding. This cabinet will allow room for growth.

Motion was made by Mr. Dutch to authorize the grant application for the Historic Document preservation program in the amount of \$4,000.00. Mr. Thomas seconded the motion and it unanimously approved. Motion carried.

c. Grant Application Request—Neglected Cemeteries:

The Board approved a similar application last year. The grant was on a first-come, first-served basis and East Haddam did not receive the grant. This year notification came on July 25th and immediate application was made to increase the odds of receipt. It was noted that if the Board disapproves, the grant (if awarded) would not be accepted.

Motion was made by Mr. DiCristofaro to authorize the grant application for the Neglected Cemetery Account Grant Program in the amount of \$2,000. Mr. Dutch seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved. Motion carried.

b. Consumers Union of the United States Gift Acceptance:

Each year Consumers Union makes a donation to both the Town and the Board of Education in a total amount of \$25,000. The most recent donation is as follows:

Informational Monitors for three schools (\$5,000)
Climbing Wall at the Elementary School (\$12,000)
Lighting for Heritage Park Walking Trail (\$8,000).

Mrs. Varricchio noted that action by Board of Finance was required for the Heritage Park donation.

Motion was made by Mr. Lauria to accept a gift in the amount of \$8,000 from Consumers Union of the United States, Inc. (dba Consumer Reports) for the purpose of lighting at the Heritage Park Walking trail and to request that the Board of Selectmen schedule a Town Meeting for approval. Mr. Thomas seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved. Motion carried.

Motion was made by Mr. Dutch to adjourn at 7:57 pm. Mr. Lauria seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Deb Denette, Town Clerk