

Special Town Meeting
February 2, 2016

Town Clerk, Debra H. Denette called the Special Town Meeting to order at 8:00 at the Town Meeting Hall, 492 Town Street, East Haddam. Thirty-four (34) people were in attendance. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Edward Blaschik motioned to nominate Deb Denette as Moderator. Kathy Klinck seconded the motion. Additional nominations were solicited, none were offered. Mr. Blaschik motioned to close nominations, Ms. Klinck seconded the motion. The motion closing nominations carried unanimously via voice vote. The Town Clerk called for a vote appointing Deb Denette to serve as Moderator, the motion carried unanimously via voice vote.

The Moderator briefly defined the rules of conduct and presented the call of the meeting. Mr. Blaschik motioned to accept the call as presented. Ms. Klinck seconded the motion. The motion accepting the call as presented carried unanimously via voice vote.

Item #1: Mr. Blaschik motioned, Mr. Walter seconded that the legislative body herein assembled act upon the recommendation of the Board of Selectmen and the Board of Finance to accept a gift of an oil painting of Chapman Falls named "reflections" donated from artist Trenton F. Youngs.

Mrs. Denette advised that the painting is hung in the Town Clerk's Office and she encouraged East Haddam citizens to come into the office and see it.

There being no further discussion, the Moderator called for a vote to accept the gift of an oil painting entitled "Reflections" donated by artist Trenton F. Youngs. The motion carried unanimously via voice vote.

Item #2: Mr. Blaschik motioned, Ms. Klinck provided the second that the legislative body herein assembled act upon the recommendation of the Board of Selectmen and the Board of Finance to accept a gift from the East Haddam Community Lions for the Town of East Haddam in the amount of \$350.00 for the Heritage Park Lighting Project.

Opportunity for discussion was offered, no comments or questions were raised. Accordingly, the Moderator called for a vote to accept the gift of \$350.00 for the Heritage Park Lighting Project from the East Haddam Community Lions. The motion carried unanimously via voice vote.

Item #3: Ms. Klinck motioned, Mr. Blaschik provided the second that the legislative body herein assembled act upon the recommendation of the Board of Selectmen and the Board of Finance to accept a gift from the Mark B. Walter campaign account Re-Elect Walter/Link in the amount of \$300.00 for the Heritage Park Lighting Project.

Opportunity for discussion was offered, no comments or questions were raised. Accordingly, the Moderator called for a vote to accept the gift of \$300.00 for the

Heritage Park Lighting Project from the Re-Elect Walter/Link campaign. The motion carried unanimously via voice vote with Mr. Walter abstaining.

Item #4 Mr. Walter motioned, Ms. Klinck provided the second that the legislative body herein assembled act upon the recommendation of the Board of Selectmen and the Board of Finance to authorize the First Selectman to execute a three-year contract on behalf of the Town of East Haddam with Constellation Energy for electricity supply at a rate of \$.0783/kWh.

Opportunity for discussion was offered. TJ Tarbox inquired whether it was typical to execute a three-year contract. Mr. Walter responded that the term is longer, however, rates are at a twenty-year low and it seemed prudent to take advantage of the rate.

There being no further discussion, the Moderator called for a vote to authorize the First Selectman to execute a three-year contract on behalf of the Town of East Haddam with Constellation Energy for electricity supply at a rate of \$.0783/kWh. The motion carried unanimously.

Item #5: Ms. Klinck motioned, Mr. Walter provided the second that the legislative body herein assembled act upon the recommendation of the Board of Selectmen and the Board of Finance to authorize the First Selectman to execute a two-year contract on behalf of the town of East Haddam with East River Energy for regular unleaded gasoline at a rate of \$1.8350/gallon.

Opportunity for discussion was offered, Charlotte Gelston inquired what happens if the prices continue to go down. Mr. Walter advised that the price is a lock and the Town would be held to it regardless of whether prices went up or down. Being no additional discussion, the Moderator called for a vote to authorize the First Selectman to execute a two-year contract on behalf of the Town of East Haddam with East River Energy for regular unleaded gasoline at a rate of \$1.8350/gallon. The motion carried unanimously.

Item #6: Ms. Klinck motioned, Mr. Blaschik provided the second that the legislative body herein assembled act upon the recommendation of the Board of Selectmen and Board of Finance to approve the written agreement with Dutch Lower Mill Properties, LLC for abatement of property taxes under the Town of East Haddam ordinance entitled "Tax and Business Incentive Program" adopted June 30, 2010 and amended June 30, 2015 and that Mark B. Walter is hereby authorized and directed on behalf of the Town to execute and deliver the agreement for the purposes provided therein together with such documents as he or she may determine to be necessary and appropriate to evidence secure and otherwise complete the agreement regarding real property tax assessment.

Opportunity for discussion was offered, Peter Simmons, the Town's former Economic Development Coordinator defined the program and how Dutch Lower Mill Properties LLC fit the criteria; he encouraged its passage. There were no other comments. Accordingly, the Moderator called for a vote to authorize the written agreement with Dutch Lower Mill Properties LLC for abatement of property taxes under the Town of East Haddam ordinance entitled "Tax and Business Incentive Program" adopted June 30, 2010 and amended June 30, 2015 and that Mark B.

Walter is hereby authorized and directed on behalf of the Town to execute and deliver the agreement for the purposes provided therein together with such other documents as he or she may determine to be necessary and appropriate to evidence secure and otherwise complete the agreement regarding real property tax assessment. The motion carried unanimously via voice vote.

Item #7: Bruce Dutch motioned, Ms. Klinck provided the second that the legislative body herein assembled consider and act upon the recommendation of the Board of Finance to approve a transfer of \$23,418.37 from the General Fund to the Board of Education capital reserve fund.

Opportunity for discussion was offered, Mrs. Varricchio, the Town's Financial Director, advised that as has been the Town's practice, unspent funds from the Board of Education's budget are being transferred into a reserve fund for capital projects for the Board of Education. Mr. Tarbox inquired why the funds were not spent. Mrs. Varricchio stated that the Board of Education achieved cost savings in certain areas and rather than spending it on unbudgeted items returned it to the Town. Linda Stuhlman inquired where this policy could be found. Mrs. Varricchio stated that it is a protocol of the Board of Finance that has been practiced since 2011, it is not defined as policy. In the absence of additional comments or concerns, the Moderator called for a vote authorizing the transfer of \$23,418.37 from the General Fund to the Board of education capital reserve fund. The motion carried unanimously via voice vote.

Item #8: Mr. Walter motioned, Mr. Dutch provided the second to act upon the recommendation of the Board of Finance to approve a transfer of FEMA grant proceeds in the amount of \$51,000 to the capital projects funds.

Opportunity for discussion was offered. Mrs. Varricchio reported that these were reimbursement funds received from the Federal Government responsive to a storm. She advised that the funds have been received, however, town meeting action was required to move the funds from the general fund (town's checkbook) into the capital projects fund (savings account). There being no further discussion the Moderator called for a vote approving the transfer of FEMA grant proceeds in the amount of \$51,000 to the capital projects fund. The motion carried via voice vote with one Nay vote recorded from Mr. Tarbox.

Item #9: Joanne Roczniak motioned, Ms. Klinck provided the second that the legislative body herein assembled consider and act upon the recommendation of the Board of Selectmen and Board of Finance to fund the \$62,132 financial shortfall, as a result of the rejection of the STEAP grant for the CCA at referendum, by reducing the following named budgets (with their stated reductions) Agriculture Commission Capital-\$11,000, Assessor-\$1,064, Building Maintenance and Operations-\$189, Central Services-\$909, Elections Registrars-\$442, Finance Office-\$540, Land Use Office \$3,374, Old Middle School Operations-\$3,171, Selectmen-\$1,265, Tax Collector-\$1,459, Town Clerk-\$1,995, Legal-\$569, Agriculture Commission-\$10, Board of Assessment Appeals-\$24, Board of Finance-\$1,115, Conservation Commission-\$127, Economic Development Commission-\$332, Historic District Commission-\$24, Open Space Committee-\$107, Zoning Board of Appeals-\$38, Building Department-\$959, Fire Department-\$2,095, Fire Marshal-\$277, General Highways-\$8,637, Snow Removal-\$2,148, Town Garage, \$512, Transfer Station-\$4,723, Cemeteries-\$86, Health Services (water testing)-\$18, Senior Services-

\$994, Lakes Association-\$161, Libraries-\$2,878, Recreation Commission-\$955, Town Greens-\$370 and Transfer to Shared Services-\$9,565.

Opportunity for discussion was offered, Mr. Walter briefly reviewed the history of the project and stated that funds were expended prior to the grant being rescinded and accordingly, a funding source needs to be found to fill the holes. Paul Buhl noted the mild winter being experienced and suggested that it was premature to cut budgets when it was most plausible that considerable unexpended funds would remain in the snow removal line. Debbie Corbeil inquired why the fiscal years were being blended and also advocated for another strategy to fund the shortfall. Edward Blaschik identified budgeted savings that should have resulted from the resignations of the facilities director, economic development coordinator and public works foreman. He also identified a \$48,000 savings resulting from the bond refunding. Mrs. Varricchio replied that the savings that resulted from the bond refunding was anticipated and built into the adopted budget. Mrs. Gelston noted differing figures on published documentation. Linda Stuhlman questioned donated funds, figures and dates regarding the purchase of a tractor. Questions also arose regarding a stipend in the amount of \$5,000 paid to Deb Mathiasen for marketing services. Kevin Staehly inquired why the \$11,000 for a well was taken out as an operating cost when it was part of a capital reserve fund. Mrs. Varricchio stated that she would need to verify the line the well was in at a later date. Mrs. Gelston stated that with so many discrepancies it was not prudent approve this. Mrs. Denette stated that an action item for town meeting cannot be tabled and added that if it is the will of the legislative body to have a different scenario presented it would need to reject the motion on the floor. The Moderator called for a voice vote, the outcome of which was not discernable. Accordingly she requested a show of hands and recorded a vote of 15 yes, 13 no with many in the room not raising their hand. The audience accommodated her request for a division of the assembly with non-residents leaving the voting area. The vote 15 yes 13 no stood. The Moderator declared the motion passed.

Mr. Walter motioned to adjourn at 8:43 pm. Mr. Blaschik seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Attest: Debra H. Denette, East Haddam Town Clerk
February 3, 2016