

TOWN OF EAST HADDAM

Board of Finance

Special Meeting Minutes

March 9, 2019

Municipal Office Complex

Meeting Rooms 1 and 2

Mr. DiCristofaro called the Board of Finance meeting to order at 9:02 am. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited and recording devices started.

In attendance:

Board of Finance Members

William DiCristofaro, Chairman

Bruce Dutch

Todd Gelston

Tracey Gionta

Harvey Thomas

Others

Emmett J. Lyman, First Selectman

Robert Smith, Selectman

Deb Denette, Town Clerk

Bryan Perry, Chairman, Board of Education

Brian Reas, Superintendent of Schools

Cindy Varricchio, Finance Director

Approximately 30 staff and citizens were in the audience.

BUDGET FORUM

Introduction and Overview

Mr. DiCristofaro stated that at this meeting the Board of Finance will receive the budget. He stated that this is the first meetings of many, he advised that it will get into more detail in subsequent meetings. Mr. DiCristofaro recognized Board of Education Chairman, Bryan Perry.

Board of Education Presentation

Mr. Perry noted that the Board of Education began its budget process in September. He noted that there have been 15 meetings where the public has had opportunity to be heard. Mr. Perry introduced Superintendent of Schools Brian Reas to present the Board of Education budget.

Superintendent Reas was experiencing technical difficulties with the PowerPoint presentation; Mr. DiCristofaro invited First Selectman Lyman to present the Board of Selectmen's budget.

Board of Selectmen Presentation

Mr. Lyman noted that a \$34,006,491 budget is being presented. He noted that it represents a 7.7% increase over last year's budget, which if adopted would result in a 1.6 mill increase. Mr.

Lyman noted that last year's budget was \$31,562,517. He noted that the Board of Selectmen reduced the original budget requests by approximately by \$4,000,000. Mr. Lyman noted that the State continues to add more burden to the municipalities. This year, the Governor's budget looks to take over vehicle taxes, which makes up 8% of revenue generated from the grand list.

First Selectman Lyman provided a comprehensive report that included:

- Vision Statement
- Goals and Objectives
- Grand List growth of approximately 1.0%
- Debt Service
- Revenue
- Recent accomplishments were noted
- Upcoming opportunities for both villages were noted
- Budget summary, capital improvement plans, debt service and reserves were reviewed, as were projected revenues.

Mrs. Gionta inquired what was represented in the \$4,000,000 that was cut. Mr. DiCristofaro responded that FEMA money is being taken out with the anticipation that as it is received, it would be available to fund the next project. Mr. Gelston noted that he looked forward to digesting the information.

Board of Education Presentation

Superintendent Reas thanked the Board for their patience.

He presented a comprehensive report that included:

- Strategic Plan Goals
- Priorities
- STEM
- Several graphs relative to budget increases and comparisons
- An adjusted capital process and the rationale for it was reviewed
- Per pupil costs were reviewed
- Capital items such as roofs, oil tanks and boilers were reviewed.
- Windows, doors and masonry at the elementary school was noted at the highest priority.

Highlights of the Board of Education budget included a Human Resources position (\$75,000), elementary school –paraprofessional—includes benefits (\$40,000), elementary school hall monitors—two part-time positions to full-time includes benefits (\$52,000) and high school AP (\$11,000).

The total proposed Board of Education Budget is \$20,600,060, representing an increase of \$560,828 or 2.80.

Mr. Thomas stated that he would like to see detailed enrollment trends for the next meeting. Mr. Gelston stated that he would like to understand what problems are trying to be solved with the HR position.

GUESTS AND AUDIENCE COMMENTS

Jo Golec, Davison Road stated that the proposed increase (7.7%) is a very large increase and she encouraged the Board to trim it significantly.

Mr. DiCristofaro stated that the budget presented represents a large increase. He emphasized that the Board of Finance is just beginning its process.

Karen Blaschik, Palmer Martin Road, and a member of the Board of Education stated that she was very disappointed with the lack of movement regarding a School Resource Officer. She noted that after a year's time, the proposal is to utilize existing Police Officers, which could have happened a year ago. She also noted that there are three schools and the solution offered will not address all of them.

BOARD DISCUSSION

Mr. DiCristofaro thanked those in attendance for coming and he encouraged Board members to read through the materials it received, as it formulates questions, he requested that they be forwarded to him or the Finance Director so that staff can provide answers at the Board of Finance Budget Workshop. The next Budget Workshop will be Saturday, March 16 beginning at 9:00 am. There is also a Board of Finance regular meeting on Monday at 7:00 pm.

Motion was made by Mr. Dutch to adjourn at 10:10 am. Mrs. Gionta seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Deb Denette