

**TOWN OF EAST HADDAM**  
**Board of Finance**  
Regular Meeting Minutes  
September 9, 2019  
Municipal Office Complex Meeting Rooms 1 and 2

Mr. DiCristofaro called the Board of Finance meeting to order at 7:02 pm. 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  
Debra Denette, Town Clerk and BOF Recording Secretary  
William Barney, Library Director  
Dawn Barlow, Library Director  
John Bielot, Library Director  
Michael Gilroy, Library Systems Director  
Beth Lunt, Public Works Director  
Cindy Varricchio, Finance Director  
Joe Zaid

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

**Motion was made by Mr. Thomas to move New Business after the Chairman's Report, to move the Finance Director's Report after New Business and to add to the First Selectman's Report item a) Transfer Station Gate Request and item b) Executive Session for the purpose of Potential Property Negotiation/Acquisition. Mr. Gelston seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved. Motion carried.**

**GUESTS AND AUDIENCE COMMENTS**

Nothing noted.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**Motion was made by Mr. Thomas to approve the minutes of the August 12, 2019 Regular meeting as presented. Mr. Gelston seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved. Motion carried.**

## **CORRESPONDENCE**

Nothing noted.

## **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

### **a. Tax Collector's Report—July:**

No questions were asked.

### **b. Board Subcommittee Reports:**

**Communications:** Mr. Gelston advised that links to prior communication articles have been loaded onto the Town's website. The endowment funds article is being updated to include this year's contributions. Once complete, it will be submitted to East Haddam News. Mr. Gelston indicated that the subcommittee would like to print the article/table in color. There will be a cost associated with printing in color. The subcommittee would like to publish the quarterly budget reports and updates on the major projects (FEMA/trees) in *East Haddam News*.

**Financial Policies:** Mr. Thomas stated that the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) Policy is ready to be delivered to the Financial Needs Roundtable. He offered a final opportunity for Board members to weigh in on the document with edits. It was emphasized that this document also calls for evaluating projects that are already in the pipeline. Mrs. Gionta noted that the Financial Needs Roundtable Committee should become a standing committee;; otherwise the document is moot.

Mr. DiCristofaro acknowledged Mrs. Gionta's concern, but noted that would be a function of the Board of Selectmen to create committees. Mr. Thomas stated that it would be useful for Board of Finance members to attend the meeting of the Board of Selectmen and Financial Needs Roundtable so that the planning tool can be explained and used correctly. The deadlines for minor tweaks to the document is the next two weeks.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **a. East Haddam Free Public Library:**

Mrs. Barlow, Chairman of the Board of Library Trustees advised that the paperwork is in place for the Town to accept the East Haddam Free Public Library building for the purchase price of \$1.00. She noted that this was always the intent, since combining of the two libraries into one library system.

Mr. Thomas noted that neither building is appropriate for a modern library. Both are too small, in disrepair, have limited parking and handicap accessibility issues. He questioned

whether it was wise for the Town to accept another building without a comprehensive long-range plan on the future of the Library system in place.

Mrs. Barlow responded that with the acquisition of the building, it puts the Library System where it thought it was six years ago. It was further noted that the building has value. Mr. Lyman advised that there is a restriction that the building remain a library, however, he noted that there is a process that would enable removal of the restriction by the Attorney General if another library were constructed.

Mr. Barney noted that there is the possibility that the Town will say no. He stated that if that were to happen, he was hopeful that the Town would continue to support the branch. He added that the Library Trustees are hopeful that the Town would consider the construction of one new library at the Town Hall/Grange Hall property. Mrs. Varricchio advised that the Trustees do not have the authority to create a study committee; only the Board of Selectmen has that authority. It was noted that the Town owns the contents of the East Haddam Free Public Library building. He noted that expansion at either library is not feasible due to small lot size and/or ledge. The basement of the Municipal Office Complex was also considered and determined to not be feasible due to moisture issues. A 14,000 square foot complex is appropriate for East Haddam's population. Between the two buildings, there are only 9,000 square feet. Mr. Barney referenced a report of the Facilities Planning Committee of the Library Trustees and stated that he would forward the document to Mrs. Varricchio for distribution to the Board of Finance.

Mrs. Gionta noted that there are five libraries in East Haddam counting the schools. She opined that East Haddam does not need that many. Mr. DiCristofaro stated that he did not see why owning another asset was a bad thing. Particularly where it would be conveyed for \$1.00.

Mr. Gelston encouraged the Town not to throw the baby out with the bath water. He noted that the school libraries are only for the students, and are not usable on a Saturday or by the majority of the population. Mr. DiCristofaro noted that there would be no expectation that once the town owned the building that it would necessitate upgrade, as it is not a change in use.

Responsive to inquiry from the Board, Mr. Lyman stated that he was not aware of any time limit. It was also noted that moving it forward would bring it to a vote of the Town's people.

Mr. Thomas stated that he would like to see a conditioned approval. First, that a study/building Committee be appointed promptly. Secondly, that no money be spent on the buildings other than that of health, safety or preservation.

**Motion was made by Mr. Gelston for the Town of East Haddam to accept the gift/donation/transfer of real and personal property from the East Haddam Free Public Library and Reading Room Association, Inc. in furtherance of the creation of a single, unified town library system as provided by the ordinance adopted June 19,**

**2013 and to recommend that the Board of Selectmen schedule a Town Meeting for approval. Mr. DiCristofaro seconded the motion.**

**Discussion: It was reiterated that this action allows the people of East Haddam to decide. The motion carried unanimously.**

**Motion was made by Mr. Thomas that the Board of Finance recommend that the Board of Selectmen appoint a Library Building Study Committee as soon as practical. Mrs. Gionta seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved. Motion carried.**

Mrs. Varricchio stated that there is virtually no capital budget for the Library System and accordingly funds cannot be expended to improve either library building without action.

**b. Transfer Station Waste Agreements:**

Mrs. Lunt advised that the Board of Selectmen voted to approve the five year waste hauling and processing agreement with Willimantic Waste. It was reiterated that there is no fiscal impact of the new contract to this year's budget, however, next year's budget will see an increase in costs associated with recyclables. Mrs. Lunt stated that costs recovered pursuant to bulky waste have increased from 30% to 60% as a direct result of more consistent scale staffing.

Mr. Gelston inquired if there were other changes within the contract besides financial. Such as acceptable vs non-acceptable items, or frequency of pick up. Mrs. Lunt was not aware of any. She further clarified that they take 100% and that the hopper often becomes full around holidays. Further discussion occurred relative to the hoppers and break away that are also under contract at considerable savings vs purchase.

**Motion by Mr. Gelston to approve the five-year waste hauling and processing agreement for municipal solid waste disposal municipal bulky waste disposal, single stream recycling with adjustable rate after 36 months and municipal hauling services with Willimantic Waste Paper Co., Inc. and to request that the Board of Selectmen schedule a town meeting for approval. Mr. Dutch seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved. Motion carried.**

**FINANCE DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

**a. June 2019 Year-End Preliminary Budget Report Updated:**

Mrs. Varricchio provided an updated to June 2019 year-end preliminary budget. The preliminary numbers show the expense budget under by \$112,000 and the revenue budget \$7,000 over.

**b. August 2019 YTD Budget Report:**

Mrs. Varricchio reported that the August budget report was not available at this time.

## **LIAISON REPORTS**

Nothing noted.

## **FIRST SELECTMAN'S REPORT**

Mr. Lyman noted that in response to many complaints regarding Building Department fees, adjustments were voted upon by the Board of Selectmen. Accordingly a reduction in the receipt of fees of \$7,000 to \$8,000 is anticipated. The adjustments align East Haddam with charges in area towns.

Quarterly reports regarding major initiatives FEMA, Trees, etc are being prepared. Mrs. Lunt noted that Petticoat Lane was completed, which was a very big undertaking. Additionally several roads were reclaimed. Neptune is out for bids. Responsive to inquiry from Mr. Thomas, Mrs. Lunt noted that Hemlock Valley and Ackley Road are still closed.

Mr. Gelston inquired how many trees were cut this year. Mrs. Lunt did not have the specifics with her. She noted, however, that to limit liability, bus stops and intersections will be the focus rather than the more efficient plan of one road at a time. It was noted that the State's focus is three phase, which indicates the amount of power lines. Mr. Gelston strongly recommended an assessment of how many trees are in need of removal, town-wide. Mr. Thomas stated that he was in favor of the targeted approach.

### **a. Transfer Station Gate Request:**

Mrs. Lunt noted the use of cones to control traffic. This has resulted in a 30% increase in the collection of bulky waste. It is also routing additional traffic over the scale, which will shorten the scales lifespan. Accordingly, a gate is recommended to control traffic flow. Mrs. Lunt noted that two quotes were solicited, one for \$12,000 the other for \$9,000. As this was not a budgeted expense, \$9,000 is requested. Mrs. Varricchio noted that if the Board of Finance approves the expense, funding can come from contingency or via a special appropriation, which would require a Town Meeting. It was noted that \$90,000 remains in contingency. It was the consensus of the Board to proceed in that manner. Mr. Gelston inquired whether a double gate could be purchased; one pedestal, two arms so that traffic could be directed over the scale or around, but admittance would be controlled to make sure only town residents gained access. Mrs. Lunt stated that a cone will be used to block the other area when the attendance steps away; she opined that a double gate would not be appropriate for that area.

**Motion was made by Mr. Dutch to transfer \$9,000 from the Board of Finance Contingency (10541020-58910) to capital (33250013-58926-C0187) for the purchase and installation of a barrier gate for the Transfer Station. Mr. Gelston seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved. Motion carried.**

## **GUESTS AND AUDIENCE AND COMMENTS**

Nothing noted.

## **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

**Motion was made by Mr. Gelston to enter Executive Session at 8:45 pm for the purpose of Potential Property Negotiation/Acquisition. Mr. Dutch seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved. Motion carried.**

**Invited Guests:** Emmett J. Lyman

**Motion was made by Mr. Dutch to exit the executive session at 9:30 pm. Mr. Gelston seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved. Motion carried.**

**Motion was made by Mr. Dutch to adjourn at 9:31 pm. Mrs. Gionta seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved. Motion carried.**

Respectfully submitted,

Debra H. Denette  
Recording Secretary