

**TOWN OF EAST HADDAM
BOARD OF FINANCE**

March 31, 2011
7:00 pm
Grange Hall

Call to Order

The special meeting of the East Haddam Board of Finance was called to order by Chairman Paul Maxwell on Thursday, March 31, 2011 at 7:00 pm at the Grange Hall.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

In attendance:

Board of Finance Members:

Paul Maxwell, Chairman
Robert Bennett
Matthew Budzik
Bruce Dutch
Susan Link
Edward Schwenzfeier

Others:

Mark Walter, First Selectman
Deb Denette, Town Clerk and BOF recording secretary
Emmett Lyman, Selectman
Richard Toolan, Road Foreman
Craig Mansfield, Emergency Management Director
Louis Pear, Board of Fire Commissioners
Jeff Rhoades, Resident State Trooper

Mr. Schwenzfeier thanked the Board and the Community for the many well wishes expressed during his recent illness.

2011-2012 Budget

Emergency Management

Mr. Mansfield joined the Board at the table and addressed questions raised at the prior meeting. He spoke of the challenge that East Haddam faces being so geographically large when it comes to communication. He stated that the budgetary questions that arose are related to the communications tower on Mount Parnassus Road and improving communications. Funds from 2009-2010 were encumbered, funds from this year will carry over and next year's funds will facilitate purchase of new equipment.

Mr. Mansfield stated that while the funding requested will improve communications, he added that an entire communications overhaul is necessary. Mr. Maxwell inquired about the potential cost of such a town-wide communications system. Mr. Mansfield guessed that it could be a \$1,000,000 project. He noted that Old Saybrook spent approximately \$2,500,000 to overhaul its communication systems. Mr. Maxwell stressed the importance of getting a place holder to the Financial Needs Committee for its

planning. Mr. Mansfield suggested a committee consisting of all disciplines be assembled to study the options for effective emergency communication throughout Town.

Mr. Mansfield also noted that there are many grant opportunities available through emergency management. He also stated that the purchase of a replacement vehicle is not necessary at this time, but needs to remain on the radar screen. He stated that the present vehicle is a 2002, but has relatively low mileage and is in good shape.

Mr. Walter noted that the next financial needs roundtable meeting is tentatively scheduled for April 18th at 7:00. He invited Mr. Mansfield to attend.

Fire Department

Mr. Pear joined the Board at the table. He advised that the existing radios were funded from a grant in 2005. He noted that many of those radios are now in need of repair or replacement. A phased approach is once again being implemented. The 2005 grant took radios out of the budget process for a significant period.

Police

Mr. Rhoades joined the Board at the table. He was aware that the concern was over the request to replace the current Barrett 40 caliber weapon with a SIG 229. Mr. Rhoades noted the advantages to having the constables carry the same firearms as the State Troopers. It was also noted that the current weapons were purchased used from the Town of Hebron in 2002. The weapons were manufactured in 1995-1996. The industry standard is 10 years. It was also noted that SIG will purchase back the weapons for the same price East Haddam purchased them for in 2002. It was also noted that the industry standard for body armor is five years.

Public Works

Mr. Toolan advised that Neptune, East Shore, and Geoffrey Roads all need to be addressed ahead of schedule due to condition and need. He noted that Johnsonville, AP Gates, Ridgebury and Woodmont are targeted for attention as identified by the pavement management program. The impact of this year's weather caused the budget to go over by approximately \$30,000. Mr. Toolan stated he was hopeful that there will be no more weather events. .

Other

A savings of \$30,461 in the Board of Education's budget has been realized due to final renewal information. Mrs. Link stated she would like to have discussion on returning that savings to the Board of Education side rather than to the General Fund. Mr. Maxwell noted that the request has not come from the Board of Education for it. Mrs. Link noted that because the adjustment is ARRA funded, it will need to be put back in next year. Additional savings from the proposed Board of Selectmen budget were obtained in fringe benefit costs for health, dental and insurance.

Updated financial information was received from the Ambulance Association. Mr. Walter noted that only one mutual aid call has been necessary in the last eight months. He stated that the incentive program is working. He also noted that workers' compensation insurance costs to the Town are higher; however, the premiums remain the same. The Town's portion was based on a formula that was based on the number of ambulances, and is now based on the number of runs attended.

Mr. Maxwell noted that the question was raised regarding capital reserve balances, and that discussion on capital reserves will be held for Monday's meeting.

Motion was made by Mr. Bennett to adjourn at 7:52 pm. Mrs. Link seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Deb Denette