

**BOARD OF FINANCE  
TOWN OF EAST WINDSOR  
11 RYE STREET  
EAST WINDSOR, CONNECTICUT 06088**

**MINUTES OF BUDGET WORKSHOP**

**Thursday, May 10, 2012 at 8:00 p.m.**

These minutes are not official until approved at a subsequent meeting.

Members Present: Jason Bowsza, Joseph Pellegrini, Danelle E. Godeck, Jerilyn Corso, Marie DeSousa, and Kathleen Pippin  
Members Absent: None  
Alternates Present: Paulette Broder and Sharon Tripp  
Alternate Absent: None  
Others: Catherine Cabral, Denise Menard, Alan Baker, Dale Nelson, Richard Pippin, James Richards, Chris Mickey, Teresa Kane, Cathy Simonelli, Carol Madore, Tom Muska, Sharon Muska, and others  
Press: Larry Smith (Patch.com)

**I. Call to Order**

Chairman Jason Bowsza called the Special Meeting to Order at 8:05 p.m., in the East Windsor High School Cafeteria.

**II. Budget Discussions**

Ms. Catherine Cabral, Treasurer, gave to the Board Members a chart explaining the different increased amounts, percentage of increase, and mill rate. Ms. Cabral indicated this was the same chart which was used at previous budget workshop meetings. Ms. Cabral mentioned that Ms. Helene Votto of 95 Miller Road had called her office. She wanted to leave a message for Members of the Board of Finance telling them that the elderly are unable to attend the meetings. The residents of this town who are retired are living on fixed incomes and are unable to afford a tax increase. She feels that 3.58% is an unfair increase in consideration that Social Security has only increased 3% over the last three years.

Chairman Bowsza mentioned Board Members Joseph Pellegrini, Jerilyn Corso and he went to the East Windsor Senior Center to last week and spoke about the budget with approximately 25 to 30 seniors. It was a wonderful opportunity! Ms. Corso added the seniors were very receptive and had great questions. Mr. Pellegrini commented good questions and concerns were brought to attention. Mr. Bowsza also mentioned that he was recently invited to the senior staff

meeting. He sat with the department heads and got a good perspective about the budget. The meeting was approximately two hours and was beneficial for this evening's discussion. Also discussed was trying to get the word out to vote. Ms. Denise Menard, First Selectwoman and Dr. Teresa Kane, Superintendent of Schools, have agreed to place signs outside of the Town Hall, Town Annex and East Windsor High School reminding the residents to vote in the referendum. It was asked if it was illegal to put an article from the newspapers on the website. A reporter who was at the meeting indicated as long as the website credited the company/newspaper, there would be no problem. Other suggestions on how to spread the word around town to let the public know the referendum will be taking place.

Mr. Bowsza asked each of the Board Members, including the Alternate Members on what their suggestions were as to presenting a budget for the second referendum. Ms. Godeck commented that the people who voted the budget down do not want an increase at all. Since the Charter reads that after three failed referendums, a two percent default will take effect. This was put into the Charter with the intention of keeping the town moving. Mr. Pellegrini indicated the 3.58% suggested decreasing the budget to a two percent increase. Mr. Bowsza commented that presenting a two percent increase budget would be disingenuous; but the 3.5% is too high and must be decreased. Ms. DeSousa remarked that certain population in town cannot afford an increase; however, the town has to be maintained and the school district needs funding. Ms. Tripp commented that she didn't want to see any personnel lose their jobs and doesn't want to see services to be cut. Ms. Godeck commented that the Town side is in desperate need of an upgrade to the computer system. She indicated that a lot of capital improvement projects have been delayed and the Town is trying to play catch up. Other expenses such as medical costs have increased. The Town has negotiated the medical costs in an attempt to get the best possible quote. Ms. Broder commented that services should not be cut and the 3.58% budget was a fair budget. Ms. Pippin indicated that the Town must communicate better with the residents. She hoped there would be some suggestions from the Public Hearing held previously, but she did not hear of any. She does not want to lose teachers, but the Town side of the budget is really at bare bones and no cuts can be made. Ms. Corso indicated that she has not had a raise in five years. However, good education is very important and the Town buildings are falling apart and need repair. She has attended good meetings at the Board of Education regarding their strategic planning and great things are happening in the district and she does not want that momentum to stop.

A discussion was held regarding the revenues expected from the State of Connecticut and the status of the MBR. Ms. Cabral explained the MBR was a State of Connecticut formula which is in place for two years and the Town is fine for two years. After the two years, she is not sure how the MBR will be calculated. Mr. Bowsza requested clarification from the State of Connecticut regarding the MBR issue.

A brief discussion was held regarding the gradual increase of the contingency fund and how that fund is used for emergency purposes.

Mr. Pellegrini began to discuss some suggestions he had regarding cutting the budget. He suggested cutting funds for the salt and sand for public works. He was told that is a contractual obligation and it could not be cut. He also suggested cutting from the insurance and benefits. He was reminded that category includes the heart and hypertension payments which the Town is legally bound to pay. Ms. Cabral commented that also in that category is the unemployment insurance benefit which has increased approximately \$20,000 due to recent notifications. Also, he suggested cutting from the two contingency funds. Mr. Alan Baker suggested cutting the high school generator. He indicated this is a rush to purchase item due to the terrible weather which has been experienced this past year; however, this generator may not even be used for a while. Mr. Richard Pippin remarked that the schools have been in existence since the 1960's and never had a generator before. Park Hill, Town Hall, and Broad Brook Fire House/Senior Center have generators which can be used in emergencies. It was suggested maybe to revisit the subject and search for possible grant monies to pay. Ms. Dale Nelson indicated that the Emergency Management will be holding a drill in June so if an emergency does happen, the Town will be prepared. Mr. James Ricahrds commented that he agreed with Mr. Baker and his suggestion of cutting the high school generator. The other items on the Town side of the budget cannot be touched. He understands that budgets flow and transfers take place.

A discussion was held regarding revenues, expenditures and how Town departments have been managing their budgets creatively to get the jobs done. Ms. Menard commented that she would rather the Board give her an amount of money which will be cut and the Town budget can be reviewed to where those cuts will be taken. Ms. Cabral reminded everyone that the budget is due in the Town Clerk's Office. Again all of the Board Members and Alternate Members were asked what their positions were for decreasing the budget.

A lengthy discussion of regarding the pros and cons of cutting the cost of the high school generator took place.

It was **MOVED** (Godeck) and **SECONDED** (Pellegrini) and **PASSED** (3-2) (M. DeSousa and K. Pippin dissenting) that the Board of Finance agrees to decrease the budget by \$130,000 in the CIP Budget for the High School Generator.

The conversation began regarding additional cuts which have to be made. The topic of cutting the garbage collection was suggested. The Board was reminded that the Town has recently entered into a contract for the garbage collection which is for three years.

Dr. Teresa Kane suggested cutting some of the capital improvement projects which she requested. Ms. Cabral commented that the project request for the replacement of doors has already had money allocated to that project through transfers which occurred from the CNR account recently. Dr. Kane was asked what amount of money cut would affect the staff. Dr. Kane commented that cutting \$425,000 would mean cuts in staff and programs.

A lengthy discussion was held and figures were discussed. A motion was entertained by Ms. DeSousa proposing a budget increase of 2.85%. The motion was never seconded.

It was then suggested \$100,000 be taken from the Board of Education which would be fair since the Town has been cut \$130,000 for the generator. It was agreed the proposed budget should be in the range of an increase of 2.5% and 2.8% with the hopes that more people will turn out for the vote, since a small minority of the voters came out and took the time to vote. The discussion continued regarding the Town, the demographics, and the population of economically challenged residents.

It was **MOVED** (DeSousa) and **SECONDED** (Godeck) and **PASSED** (4-1)(J. Pellegrini dissenting) that the Board of Finance reduces the Board of Education budget by \$100,000.

After the vote took place, Ms. Cabral asked the Board Members to refer to the chart she passed out previously and with the proposed reductions thus far, the budget increase is approximately 2.87%. Mr. Bowsza indicated the amount of reductions is \$230,000 which would make the proposed budget \$34,208,525, which translates as a 2.89% increase.

The conversation then began about the trash collection and the cost of same. It was suggested if the trash collection was discontinued; it would save the Town approximately \$830,000. It was asked of Ms. Menard if the trash collection was discontinued, how much would it cost per household. Ms. Menard reminded the Board if the Town were to charge for the trash collection, another position would have to be added to administer and process all of the payments. Ms. Menard also indicated that the trash contract was just renewed for three years and taxpayers have to understand the Town is obligated.

A discussion was held on how the budget can be reduced. It was decided that if an additional \$70,000 was cut, it would make the increase \$891,047 or a budget of \$34,138,525 or a 2.68% increase. Therefore, a total of \$300,000 would be cut from the first proposed budget. The conversation continued among Board Members, Ms. Menard and Ms. Cabral regarding cutting an additional \$70,000 to the budget. In doing so, the increase in the mill rate would be approximately .56 mill.

Board Recessed at 9:53 p.m.  
Board Reconvened at 10:01 p.m.

It was **MOVED** (Godeck) and **SECONDED** (Pippin) and **PASSED** (U) that the Board of Finance to put forth a budget reducing the Town side \$130,000 and reducing the Board of Education in the amount of \$170,000 for a total of \$300,000 making the 2012-2013 Proposed Budget \$34,138,525 or an increase of \$891,047 or 2.68% and a mill rate increase of approximately .56 mills.

Before the meeting was adjourned, Mr. Bowsza indicated in order to change the referendum times pursuant to the public input, a motion would be in order to request the Board of Selectmen change the referendum times.

It was **MOVED** (Pellegrini) and **SECONDED** (Pippin) and **PASSED** (U) that the Board of Finance requests the Board of Selectmen to move the referendum voting times to 6:00 a.m. through 8:00 p.m.

### **III. Adjournment**

It was **MOVED** (Godeck) and **SECONDED** (Corso) and **PASSED** (U) that the Board of Finance adjourns the Special Meeting of May 10, 2012 at 10:15 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Denise M. Piotrowicz  
Recording Secretary