

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

**MINUTES OF PUBLIC HEARING**

**Wednesday, April 11, 2012 at 7:00 p.m.**

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

Members Present: Jason Bowsza, Joseph Pellegrini, Marie DeSousa, Danelle E. Godeck, Jerilyn Corso, 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, Teresa Kane, Cathy Simonelli, William Schultz, William Raber, Nichole DeSousa, Kathy Bilodeau, Carol Madore, Chief Edward DeMarco, Joseph Sauerhoufer, Jack Mannette, Jim Barton, Lois Noble, Tom Muska, Richard Morrison, and many others

Press: Kate Carey-Trull (Patch.com)

**I. Call to Order**

Chairman Jason Bowsza called the Public Hearing to Order at 7:09 p.m., in the East Windsor Middle School Auditorium.

Chairman Jason Bowsza thanked everyone for attending the Public Hearing and reminded anyone who would like to address the Board after the presentations, a sign-up sheet was on the conference table and it was asked to write their name and address and limit their comments to three minutes. He thanked the Board of Selectmen and Board of Education for all of their hard work in their proposed budgets and also thanked the Board Members of the Board of Finance for the changing tone of making this budget fair and honest for the citizens of the Town of East Windsor.

**II. Presentation of Proposed Budgets for Fiscal Year 2012-2013**

Chairman Jason Bowsza thanked everyone for attending the Public Hearing and reminded anyone who would like to address the Board after the presentations, a sign-up sheet was on the conference table and it was asked to write their name and address and limit their comments to three minutes. He thanked the Board of Selectmen and Board of Education for all of their hard work in their proposed

budgets and also thanked the Board Members of the Board of Finance for the changing tone of making this budget fair and honest for the citizens of the Town of East Windsor.

Chairman Bowsza indicated that the budget which is being presented is a level service budget which does not add new positions or programs. He indicated the Town is taking steps to prepare for emergency weather conditions as was experienced in the past year. The Board of Finance also took into consideration investing in the Town's infrastructure which everyone is in agreement is a priority. It has been agreed that the Capital Improvement Projects to be a percentage of the entire budget and as the budget grows, the Capital Improvement Project budget will grow. Also, this is the first year that the Board of Finance has decided to fund elderly tax relief.

Chairman Bowsza indicated that some capital improvement projects which were requested will be funded through the capital nonrecurring accounts and he thanked the Treasurer for all of her efforts in funding those projects, so the Capital Improvement Project budget could be trimmed.

Chairman Bowsza indicated that the budget requested is 3.58% increase over last year's budget. The Board of Finance has trimmed the proposed budgets which were originally proposed by the Board of Selectmen and Board of Education. Mr. Bowsza also discussed the increase in local revenues. Therefore, the proposed mill rate to support the proposed budgets would be an increase of .84 mills.

At this point of the hearing, Chairman Bowsza indicated that if anyone from the public would like to comment on the proposals, they may do so.

Mr. Jim Barton, 158 South Water Street, addressed the Board. He indicated he was here in behalf of the Veterans Commission. He said historically the budget allowed approximately \$1,000 for replacement of flags for the cemeteries. Over the past years and budget constraints, the monies have been cut from that line. He would like the Board to reconsider for the purchase of the flags, which is approximately for 900 graves.

Mr. Richard Morrison, 29 Willow Circle addressed the Board. He indicated that his home is assessed at a very high rate, which is approximately 35% to 45% higher than the value of the home presently. He has not been able to sell it due to the economic conditions. His taxes have increased 5.5% last year and 10% the year before and due to the poor economy do not understand how the taxes can keep increasing. Surrounding towns are not asking for such high increases and some towns are actually lowering taxes. He suggested everyone sharpens their pencils and give the tax payer a break.

Mr. Jack Mannette, Old Ellington Road addressed the Board. He commented that it was nice to see that the Board has cut the originally proposed budget to 3.58%,

which is actually a tax increase of 3.44%. However, he believes the budget needs to be cut further. He believes that increasing taxes constantly, even by a small margin, has increased taxes considerably over the past four years. He gave an example of tax increases due to this budget on a house worth \$200,000. He commented that the increase would be approximately \$168.00. But looking at the budgets from the past, all the way back to 2007-2008, the tax increases have been 24.79% or \$969 on average over the past four years. He asked the Board to reconsider the hardships which are faced with the taxpayers of the Town. He commented on the increases of the salaries and benefits of the employees and suggested cutting those increases and putting more money toward the Town's infrastructure.

Another concern he raised was the most recent action taken by the Board of Selectmen giving an employee a \$9,000 raise, which equals to be \$823 a month. The increase was not part of the current budget and it was not done correctly according to the Charter. He also reminded everyone that three bargaining units contract negotiations are continuing this year and next year and wondered how those people who are in the negotiations feel about this raise. He indicated that the Board of Selectmen and Board of Finance include in their budgets monies which are set aside for the negotiations and no one in the public realizes this. He commented that he is concerned about the 43% increase in insurance and benefits.

In conclusion, he indicated the only voice East Windsor has is the Charter and if the budget fails three times, the Charter dictates a 2% spending increase and he would recommend to the Board of Finance to propose an increase of 2% or less.

Mr. Bill Dove addressed the Board. He asked the Board of Finance to look at the surrounding town to see how those towns propose their budgets and not ask for such high increases. He commented that the increases that have been given in the past and the increase which is being requested is unsustainable. He would like the Board of Finance to reconsider the increase proposed. He also commented on the nontax revenue which is received from the State of Connecticut and how that revenue is not increasing.

Mr. Brian Cullinane, 6 Sunview Drive addressed the Board. He indicated he is in favor of the 3.58% increase being proposed. He commented that if the referendum fails, it will cost the Town money and he asks everyone to vote in favor of the budget.

Mr. David Corrado, 1 Lyndsey Lane addressed the Board. He echoes the comments of Mr. Cullinane and is in favor of the budget. He believes that the Board of Selectmen and Board of Finance have done a responsible budget. He believes if the Board of Education budget is not supported, the Town will be losing more children to the magnet schools.

Ms. Cecelia Harman of Melrose Road addressed the Board. She is also in favor of the budget presented. She has children in the school system and she is very happy with the school system. The problem unfortunately is the Town loses quality teachers.

Mr. Tom Muska of East Road addressed the Board. He indicated he is overwhelmed by the level of government from the Federal all the way down to the local levels. No one represents the taxpayer any more. The politicians are advocates for department heads. The employees of the town government do not realize what employees in the private sector deal with on a daily basis. He spoke about state and municipal payrolls along with benefits. He indicated that taxes have doubled since 1997. For example, salary for the First Selectmen back in 1997 was \$30,000 and now it is \$60,000. He also spoke about the unions and constantly increasing salaries and benefits.

Ms. Jennifer Raglia (sp) of 64 Middle Road addressed the Board. She indicated she was in favor of the budget presented. She believes the economy is starting to turn around. If the schools are not accredited, the value of homes will decrease.

Mr. Chris Willington of 19 Berry Lane addressed the Board. He also commented that he was in favor of the proposed budget. He thanked the Boards for all of their hard work. His wife is a teacher in East Windsor and has not received a raise last year. The town is moving in the right direction with the investment of the sewer lines and hopefully brings in new businesses to the Town.

No one else volunteered to speak.

### **III. Adjournment**

The public hearing was closed at 7:37 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Denise M. Piotrowicz  
Recording Secretary