

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

MINUTES OF SPECIAL MEETING-BUDGET WORKSHOP

Tuesday, March 27, 2012 at 7:00 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: Sharon Tripp
Alternate Absent: Paulette Broder
Others: Catherine Cabral, Denise Menard, and Dale Nelson,
Press: None

I. Call to Order

Chairman Jason Bowsza called the Special Meeting-Budget Workshop to Order at 7:04 p.m., in the Board Brook Library.

II. Budget Discussions of Proposed Budgets for Fiscal Year 2012-2013

Ms. Catherine Cabral, Treasurer, gave to all Board Members documents for their review. Those documents included "Revenue Building" dated March 27, 2012, "Preliminary Budget Building" dated March 27, 2012, "Board of Education Special Revenue Accounts" dated March 26, 2012, and an untitled document which was a spreadsheet which showed figures regarding budget increases, budget proposals, tax base, and mill rate proposals. She indicated there had been a change in the revenues. First Selectwoman Denise Menard was present at this meeting to answer any questions which the Board Members may have regarding those changes in the documents. Ms. Menard reminded the Board that she is always available by telephone if any questions arise regarding the proposed budget.

Ms. Menard and Ms. Cabral explained the four documents in detail to the Board Members. Ms. Menard also discussed the Charter and if the budget does not pass after three referendums, how the 2% increase has been determined to be implemented. She referenced a legal opinion which was obtained explaining same. She did add that the proposed budget which has been presented is a realistic budget and worrying about the 2% increase after failing three referendums should not be considered if it happens.

A brief discussion was held.

Board Member Ms. Marie DeSousa inquired about the electricity costs and asked if that question had been researched. Ms. Menard inquired if the question was about electrical contractors or electricity for the Town properties. The question related to heating and energy costs. Ms. Menard indicated that the Town has entered into a competitive market in December of 2011. Previously, the electricity was being purchased from Trans Canada. She indicated the Town has no intention of going out for bid on heating oil. She indicated the Board of Selectmen has started to clean up the excess and shut down the heat at the Annex for parts of the building which are not occupied. This has saved the Town approximately nine thousand gallons. The Town does not want to commit to a contract due to the fact that in the past the over committed and storage of the fuel was an issue. She is attempting to work with the Board of Education as a shared service and have a individual in pace with business expertise who can bargain for heating oil and other services which the Town and Board of Education can share. It was inquired if the Board of Education has a business manager because in the past the Superintendent was also performing the business manager's duties. Ms. Menard commented that Ms. Linda Giuliano is the business manager for the Board of Education presently.

A question regarding the gas policy and travel reimbursement was discussed. Ms. Menard remarked that the Board of Selectmen really has not come up with any type of gas policy. However, travel reimbursement can be obtained at \$0.55 per mile.

Chairman Bowsza indicated that the Board will continue with their budget review and they will begin with the Building Committee.

- **Building Committee (1086)**

No comments were made and nothing was changed.

- **E.D.C. (1115)**

Ms. Menard indicated this department was increased a few years ago and she is suggesting that this should not be decreased. The EDC has been beneficial to the Town during the sewer projects, hosting seminars for the Route 140 Corridor and advertising of the projects to keep the townspeople aware of the ongoing projects. No changes were made.

- **Z.B.A. (1120)**

It was indicated that this budget was cut approximately in half. It was noted that the recording secretarial fees have been cut due to the fact that meetings have been cancelled. No changes were made.

▪ **Planning and Zoning (1124)**

Mr. Bowsza questioned an increase in conference and training. Ms. Menard indicated that Ms. Whitten, Town Planner, has cut back her training and is only attending training in New England and the Atlantic seaboard. She does have training in Colorado which she is paying for the airfare herself. The conference is beneficial for her to keep her current of the newest regulations and laws. No other changes were made.

▪ **Building Department (1125)**

An explanation of professional services was asked. Ms. Menard explained that professional services are used when the Building Official is on vacation and someone with the credentials must be able to temporarily take the Building Official's place.

A discussion was held regarding the act of condemning a property and how the Town goes about doing same. Ms. Menard gave an example of an ongoing property on North Water Street which the Town is presenting working on demolishing and how that process takes place.

A quick question regarding the part-time salary increase and the vehicle maintenance line were discussed. No changes were made.

▪ **Elderly Commission (1129)**

No changes were made.

▪ **Senior Center (1130)**

It was questioned why the vehicle maintenance line has increased \$6,000 to \$14,000. Ms. Menard indicated that the chemicals which are being used to treat the roads have really done some damage to the undercarriage of the vans. The oldest van in the fleet will be disposed of shortly and the Broad Brook Fire Department has expressed interest because they would like to transport their junior firefighters. It was questioned how the fire department will purchase the van and if the title will go to the association so the fire department would be responsible for maintenance fees and insurance fees on that van. Ms. Menard indicated she was not sure exactly how the transaction would take place because the discussion of the purchase is still ongoing. It was also inquired if the vans should be brought to a car wash to wash off those chemicals after the vans are used. Ms. Menard indicated the procedure of washing the vans is still being discussed as well.

Ms. Menard began discussing the transportation at the senior center. She indicated this oldest van is being disposed of and a new one was just purchased through a dial-a-ride grant. The center has also been using the town car for trips of fewer than three people for doctor's appointments and other appointments. This has decreased the use of gas and maintenance on the vans. It has also been suggested that the next vehicle to be rolled out of the police department be added to the senior center fleet of vehicles. Ms. Menard explained the senior center has been in transition with Ms. Betsy Burns overseeing the department and the addition of two new part-time employees and activities and attendance has increased. She also indicated the senior center budget is still including a budget for three full time drivers; however, presently there are only two full time drivers and one part-time driver. She believes the budget presented is a realistic budget for the senior center. Ms. DeSousa added that the senior center serves the town in many ways by providing transportation to medical appointments, distribution of flu shots and other health related services, and nutrition services.

A brief discussion was held and no changes were made to the budget.

▪ **Board of Finance (1135)**

It was noted that the budget was decreased approximately \$3,900 due to the decreasing cost of printing the annual report.

A brief discussion was held and no changes were made to the budget.

▪ **Ethics Commission (1144)**

There are only two lines within this budget and \$10.00 is the place holder for each of those lines. No changes were made.

▪ **Miscellaneous Town Government (1145)**

Chairman Bowsza indicated that this category has a 4.02% increase. Ms. Menard explained briefly each line. No changes were made.

▪ **Inland/Wetlands (1150)**

Chairman Bowsza indicated the members of this Commission do require training. Ms. Menard indicated it is a tricky board and Ms. Robin Newton is certified in the issues and the issues are very complex. Some members have taken upon themselves to have training in this area. No changes were made.

- **27th Payroll**

Ms. Cabral indicated that this figure changes every year. Last year it was at the highest level due to the way the calendar falls. This year is the smallest year being two days. No changes were made.

- **Town Government/Employee Benefits**

A brief discussion was held regarding a decrease of \$25,000 in retirement enhancement. No changes were made.

- **Public Safety Hearing Officer (2100)**

There are only three lines within this budget and \$10.00 is the place holder for each of those lines. This category covers if any parking tickets are issued and a hearing can be held contesting same. There hasn't been a hearing in quite some time; however, money is being placed in those lines as a place holder. No changes were made.

- **Police Commission (2144)**

Chairman Bowsza indicated this budget was done very well. No changes were made.

- **Police Department (2145)**

Ms. DeSousa indicated the police department has done an excellent job over the years. Ms. Menard remarked that if the Board had any questions regarding this proposed budget, they should contact the Chief or Deputy Chief.

A brief discussion was held on the overtime variable line. No changes were made.

- **Communication System Maintenance (2147)**

Ms. Menard indicated this figure is a real figure. She discussed the Tolland County Ambulance Association charge of \$5,500 for dispatching to other towns during mutual aid calls. This is due to the contact with the Ambulance Association that the Town would be responsible for communication fees. Ms. Dale Nelson reminded everyone that this was the last year of the contact.

A discussion was held regarding the current contact with the Ambulance Association and the outstanding service the Ambulance Association provides for the townspeople. No changes were made.

▪ **Fire Departments (2150)**

It was questioned why the Warehouse Point Fire District had a bigger budget request than the Broad Brook Fire Department and it was answered that Warehouse Point was bigger than Broad Brook. Chairman Bowsza indicated that the Board of Selectmen decided that the fire departments and libraries would receive an increase 1.5% across the board.

A lengthy discussion was held regarding the budget requests, recent projects performed at the Warehouse Point Firehouse, and the possibility of the fire district becoming a taxing authority.

▪ **Fire Protection (2160)**

Ms. Cabral indicated that this line was the set rate for the hydrants. No changes were made.

▪ **Fire Marshall (2165)**

Chairman Bowsza asked if anyone had any questions regarding this category. No questions were asked and no changes were made.

▪ **Emergency Management (2170)**

It was asked if the funds requested were enough to have productive resources in this department. Ms. Menard indicated that she has been promised that the funds available will work within this department. There are a lot of grant opportunities for reimbursement which are being looked into. A stipend has been added to fund the director for the work in researching and writing grants for generators and other equipment needs. No changes were made.

▪ **Dog Warden (2175)/Dog Damage (2180)**

A brief discussion was held regarding the expenditures for the dog warden/dog damage which have come from the general fund.

▪ **Public Safety/Employee Benefits (2195)**

Ms. Cabral indicated this has been decreased approximately \$10,000 and she explained the retirement enhancement. No changes were made.

- **Public Works (3180)**

Ms. Menard indicated this category has had a big change. Public Works and Engineering has been combined as one category. She indicated the director of public works and town engineer is being paid out of one line and there has been confusion in the past regarding this salary. Now being combined, a line has been added entitled “director/engineer” so there would be no more confusion. A question regarding the Park and Recreation Overtime line and if that was included in this public works budget. It was acknowledged that it has. The tree maintenance line has been increased for obvious reasons.

A brief discussion was held and no changes were made.

- **Road Improvements (3183)**

A brief discussion regarding the increase in the sand and salt line was held. No changes were made.

- **Street Lights (3185)**

Ms. Menard indicated it was discussed to decrease the line to take off the lights which are not being used. CL&P charges are listed in a report.

A brief discussion held and no changes were made.

- **Public Woks/Employee Benefits (3195)**

No changes were made.

- **Collection and Disposal (4205)**

Ms. Menard indicated this figure is for trash collection. This is the last year of the CRRA contact. A new contract has been negotiated with USA Hauling and has decreased the cost of disposal and hazardous waste removal slightly.

A brief discussion was held regarding CRRA and no changes were made.

- **Vital Statistics/Misc Health (5210)**

A brief discussion was held regarding this category which includes North Central Health District, New Directions, and Counsel/Support. No changes were made.

- **Water Purification (5222)**

Only a \$10.00 place holder was put in this budget line. No changes were made.

- **EWVNA (5225)**

This category was flat, no changes were made.

- **Human Services (5235)**

This department, as well, came in with a little increase. An increase in office supplies which is for the ink toner for the printers. Ms. Menard has compared the prices for the toner with WD Mason and Hartford Toner in attempt to lower the cost.

A brief discussion was held on the cost of office supplies. No changes were made.

- **General Assistance (5236)**

Ms. Menard indicated that the General Assistance line has been \$15,500 since Ms. Menard can remember and that Ms. Betsy Burns has made this work for years.

A brief discussion was held regarding the services general assistance provides and no changes were made.

- **Ambulance Association (5240)**

This line has been decreased by \$43,000 due to the end of the contract.

- **Medical (5245)**

It was explained this line is used to pay for drug testing of employees, such as random drug tests of the drivers at the senior center and public works. Fees for pre-employment physicals are also paid out of this line. No changes were made.

- **Conservation of Health/Employee (5295)**

It was noted that retirement enhancement was budgeted as zero. No changes were made.

- **Libraries (6305)**

Ms. Menard indicated that both libraries, Warehouse Point and Broad Brook, were funded identical at 1.5% increase.

A brief discussion was held regarding the libraries and how the libraries must keep up with the times by ordering all types of media which has increased their costs. No changes were made.

- **Community Activities (6310)**

This line has not been funded.

- **Park and Recreation (6315)**

Ms. Menard indicated that the Board of Selectmen took the \$2,500 in the overtime line and placed it into the public works line. A question regarding the recording secretarial fees from the Park and Recreation Commission and why the line was not funded was discussed. It was ascertained the recording secretary for the Commission is also a part-time employee of the Parks and Recreation Department. Ms. Cabral also mentioned that the electricity line was cut approximately \$1,403.00.

No changes were made.

- **Park and Recreation/Employee Benefits (6395)**

No changes were made.

- **Insurance and Benefits (7345)**

It was explained that the Town has been placed on notice regarding potential claims for the Heart and Hypertension claims. Therefore, the town is compensating that line.

No changes were made.

- **Unemployment Compensation (7350)**

Ms. Cabral indicated this could be potentially a higher year for payments of unemployment compensation. This year it is being budgeted for \$20,000.

No changes were made.

▪ **Contingency Fund (9410)**

Ms. Menard and Ms. Cabral explained to the Board the contingency accounts and how the accounts are used. It was explained that the emergency contingency will be used for emergency purposes. The \$98,000 that has been requested will be split between the contingency fund and emergency contingency fund. It was explained that some of the contingency funds which were spent during the weather emergencies of the pervious year, some of that money will be reimbursed by FEMA. The actual amounts are not yet confirmed.

A discussion was held regarding the FEMA reimbursement and where those monies will be placed once received.

No changes were made.

▪ **Cemeteries (8415)**

Chairman Bowsza indicated the Cemetery Association has requested a budget \$2,000 less than last year's budget. A discussion regarding the study which was to be performed on the erosion issue has been performed and the cost of fixing that problem being \$100,000. It was indicated the cemeteries are town property; however, Ms. Robin Newton has been working with FEMA regarding this issue to see if any of the costs are reimbursable. There is also a question regarding some of that erosion being State property.

No changes were made.

III. Adjournment

It was **MOVED** (Godeck) and **SECONDED** (Corso) and **PASSED** (U) that the Board of Finance adjourns the March 27, 2012 Special Meeting-Budget Workshop at 9:03 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Denise M. Piotrowicz
Recording Secretary