

**BOARD OF FINANCE
TOWN OF EAST WINDSOR
11 RYE STREET
BROAD BROOK, CONNECTICUT 06016**

**MINUTES OF PUBLIC HEARING
Wednesday, May 14, 2014 at 7:00 p.m.**

DRAFT DOCUMENT – These minutes are not official until approved at a subsequent meeting

Members Present: Jerilyn Corso, Acting Chairman, Cindy Herms, Robert Maynard, and Sharon Tripp.
Members Absent: Robert Little.
Alternate Present: Paulette Broder and Gilbert Hayes
Alternate Absent: All Alternate members were present.
Others: **Town Treasurer:** Kim Lord; **First Selectman:** Denise Menard; **Selectmen:** Jason Bowsza, Deputy First Selectman, **East Windsor Public Schools:** Dr. Theresa Kane, Superintendent; various members of the Board of Education.

Press: Gail Montany, Journal Inquirer.

I. Call to Order:

Acting Chairman Corso called the Public Hearing to Order at 7:00 p.m.

II. Time and Place of Meeting:

Town Hall Meeting Room, 11 Rye Street, Broad Brook, CT.

III. Appointment of Alternates:

Acting Chairman Corso noted the absence of Regular Member Robert Little; she called for a motion to appoint an Alternate to fill the vacancy.

MOTION: To APPOINT Alternate Member Paulette Broder as a voting member for the May 14, 2014 Public Hearing of the Board of Finance.

Tripp moved/Herms seconded/

DISCUSSION: None.

VOTE: In Favor: Unanimous

IV. Public Participation:

Claude Cloutier, 3 Steeplechase Road, member of the East Windsor Condominium Owners Association, also speaking personally: Mr. Cloutier felt the Board of Finance was “pennywise and pound foolish” with their decision to remove money from the budget for reimbursement to the condominium owners. Mr. Cloutier suggested the budget would have passed had the Board not taken the action they did. Many of the members of the condominium association didn’t like the Board’s actions. The budget could have passed by 1100 votes.

Tom Muska, 216 East Road: Mr. Muska reported something that appeared in the JI (Journal Inquirer) caused him to come down to this meeting. Mr. Muska is tired of hearing public officials bemoan that people don’t turn out to vote, or that the vote was low. Mr. Muska indicated several hundred people voted. Prior to the passage of the Charter, which requires the referendums, budgets were passed at Town Meetings with much lower participation. Mr. Muska indicated the vote was by a call of votes; he often wasn’t even sure the people voting lived in East Windsor. Mr. Muska reiterated he is tired of hearing people don’t vote.

Mr. Muska also referenced a recent editorial by Chris Powell (of the Journal Inquirer) which referenced a study by the Rockefeller Institute regarding slowing revenue growth and stagnating personal income in the last six months. Mr. Muska suggested what Mr. Powell should have said was stagnating personal budgets, which he felt have been like that for some time.

Mr. Muska also said something must be done with the power of the unions.

Kathy Bilodeau, 343 Scantic Road, speaking as a parent and a member of the Board of Education: Ms. Bilodeau urged the Board not to take too much from the Board of Education budget as serious cuts will affect the growth in education which has been gained over the past few years. Ms. Bilodeau would hate to see any of that hindered by additional cuts.

Kara Denis, member of East Windsor Girl Scout Troop, speaking as a student: Ms. Denis didn’t want to see her math teacher laid off because they really help her.

Jessica Johnson, member of East Windsor Girl Scout Troop, also speaking as a student: Ms. Johnson felt they should have more math teachers; they don’t have a lot now. If the students have trouble they have to work on it at night.

Bill Schultz, member of the Board of Education, also speaking as a resident: Mr. Schultz reported with the budget that failed the Board of Education (BOE) made cuts, and now they will have to make more. They are making progress and would like to continue that. And, speaking as a citizen, the Town also needs to make progress. In comparison to other surrounding towns a 3% increase doesn’t seem unreasonable. The Town needs to continue that.

Acting Chairman Corso noted no else had signed up to speak. She queried the audience for additional comments; no one requested to speak.

Acting Chairman Corso CLOSED the Public Participation portion of the Public Hearing at 7:10 p.m.

V. Discussion and Action – FY 15 Budget Proposal for May 27, 2014 Referendum:

Acting Chairman Corso RECONVENED the Board of Finance Public Hearing at 7:30 p.m.

Attendance at the resumption of the meeting:

Members Present: Jerilyn Corso, Acting Chairman, Cindy Herms, Robert Little (arrived at 7:35 p.m.), Robert Maynard, and Sharon Tripp.

Members Absent: All members were present.

Alternate Present: Paulette Broder and Gilbert Hayes (returned at 7:42 p.m.).

Alternate Absent: See above.

Others: **Town Treasurer:** Kim Lord; **First Selectman:** Denise Menard; **Selectmen:** Jason Bowsza, Deputy First Selectman; Dale Nelson (arrived at 8:05 p.m.)

Acting Chairman Corso reported Chairman Joe Pellegrini has submitted his letter of resignation effective immediately. Acting Chairman Corso reported she will be chairing this meeting, and will be temporary Chairman.

Acting Chairman Corso noted the absence of Regular Member Robert Little at the resumption of the meeting; she called for a motion to appoint an Alternate to fill the vacancy.

MOTION: To APPOINT Alternate Member Paulette Broder as a voting member for the May 14, 2014 Public Hearing of the Board of Finance.

Tripp moved/Herms seconded/

DISCUSSION: None.

VOTE: In Favor: Unanimous

Acting Chairman Corso polled Board of Finance members regarding their suggestions for the Board to proceed with a revised budget proposal. It was noted the vote of the May 13, 2014 referendum was 490 in favor and 622 against the proposed budget of \$36,484,292. The voters responded to the non-binding question with 654 indicating the budget was too high, and 361 voting that the budget was too low.

Discussion continued regarding various options. Treasurer Lord then reviewed various line items within the Town budget which offered potential for reduction. She also noted

there is a potential for a substantial savings due to restructuring the 2004 bonds. If the Board chose to approve the initial changes proposed by Treasurer Lord the Town budget of \$36,484,292 proposed at the first referendum would be reduced to \$35,896,783 which would represent a 1.09% increase in Town government. The Board of Education would continue with their 4.37% increase, for a combined 3.03% total increase, which would result in a 0.27% mill rate increase.

The Board cited concern for reducing the Contingency Fund to \$50,000. Various funding values were considered, noting the effect of the additional funding on the total budget increase and mill rate increase. It was noted that last year, which was a revaluation year, 60% of the taxpayers experienced a reduction in their tax obligation.

Treasurer Lord also noted her intention to create a storm emergency contingency fund which would move any excess funds available annually in the Public Works Department budget into this emergency fund; funds would accumulate over time and would only be available for use for storm related expenditures.

MOTION: To move that the proposed FY 2014 – 2015 budget of \$35,916,782 which would result in a mill rate of 30.07 go to referendum to be held on May 27, 2014.

Maynard moved/Tripp seconded/

DISCUSSION: None.

VOTE: In Favor: Broder/Maynard/Tripp
Opposed: Little/Herms
Abstained: No one

MOTION: To move to approve an additional question to the ballot for May 27, 2014 that reads, “As a non-binding, advisory only opinion, do you feel that the Town of East Windsor budget appropriation of \$35,916,782 is too low, or too high?”

Tripp moved/Maynard seconded/

DISCUSSION: None.

VOTE: In Favor: Unanimous
(No one opposed/No abstentions)

VI. Adjournment:

MOTION: To ADJOURN this Meeting at 8:10 p.m.

Little moved/Tripp seconded/VOTE: In Favor: Unanimous

Respectfully submitted: _____
Peg Hoffman, Recording Secretary, East Windsor Board of Finance