

TOWN OF EAST WINDSOR BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Special Meeting
Thursday, February 21, 2019
6:00 p.m.
Town Hall Meeting Room
11 Rye Street, Broad Brook, CT. 06016

BUDGET PRESENTATIONS - WORKSHOP

Meeting Minutes

*** *These Minutes are not official until approved at a subsequent meeting* ***

Board of Selectmen:

Robert Maynard, First Selectman
Steve Dearborn, Deputy First Selectman
Jason Bowza, Selectman
Andy Hoffman, Selectman
Charles J. Szymanski, Selectman

ATTENDANCE: Board of Selectmen: Robert Maynard, First Selectman; Steve Dearborn, Deputy First Selectman; Jason Bowsza, Selectman; Andy Hoffman, Selectman; Charles J. Szymanski, Selectman.

ABSENT: All Selectmen were present at this Budget Workshop

PRESENTERS: Town Staff: Assessor: Helen Totz; Recreation and Community Services: Melissa Maltese, Director; **Treasurer:** Amy O'Toole.

GUESTS: No guests were present this evening.

Press: No one from the Press was present.

TIME AND PLACE OF BUDGET WORKSHOP MEETING:

First Selectman Maynard called the Meeting to Order at 6:00 p.m. in the Town Hall Meeting Room, 11 Rye Street, Broad Brook, CT.

ATTENDANCE: See above.

**TOWN OF EAST WINDSOR
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
Special Meeting
Budget Workshop Meeting – February 21, 2019
WORKSHOP MINUTES -**

PRESENTATIONS/ 6:00 P.M. – Assessor - 410700:

The total Budget request for the Assessor for FY 2019 – 2020 was \$194,615, which results in a 1.90 % increase.

Helen Totz, Assessor for the Town of East Windsor, joined the Board.

Treasurer O'Toole opened discussion of revenue, she indicated a sheet was recently published showing a Grand List growth of \$15 million, but it started at \$18 million below the approved Grand List for last year. Assessor Totz noted that there were drastic changes to the 2018 Grand List, most of the real estate changes were due to the court cases. She noted they've settled nearly all of the appeals due to the revaluation, which caused a large drop to the real estate; personal property took almost a \$1 million hit; some exemptions that were claimed to be taxable were found to be exempt.

Selectman Bowsza questioned the difference between real estate, personal property and motor vehicles. Ms. Totz indicated real estate is considered the land and anything permanently attached. Personal Property is anything moveable within the business, like furniture, computers, equipment, and any unregistered motor vehicles. Personal Property is based on self-reporting declarations filed annually; businesses fill in the appropriate categories of personal property. Different categories of personal property have different depreciation schedules. The amount of the personal property acquired in a given year is applied to the schedule, the value is depreciated based on the acquisition value and they then take 70% of that as the tax value. The various categories of personal property are then added together and that's the assessed value of that personal property. If declarations are filed late the Assessor can set the taxable rate, plus 25% of the assessed value. Inventory is not taxable. Motor Vehicles are a separate listing received from the State.

Treasurer O'Toole suggested that if she plugs the \$956 million Grand List value into a schedule, and uses the current mill rate, the Town will take in \$87,000 less in taxable revenue. Even for the current year about \$600,000 of the tax revenue budgeted for last year will not be collectible on that \$18 million; there will be a shortfall in tax collection for the current year.

Selectman Hoffman referenced the GIS mapping project under ***Goals and Priorities***. Ms. Totz explained the GIS (Geographic Information System) mapping is available online. When the system was first implemented there were several "problem" properties which required investigation; either the assessor records or the person identified on the map didn't match up. Ms. Totz noted resolution of the mapping issues is her pet project. They are mandated by State Statutes to have maps, for them to be accurate, and to be updated. There are approximately 125 problem properties which require review. The mapping system requires constant updating; Ms. Totz notes new subdivisions, lot combinations, etc. as they occur. Ms. Totz sends her map revisions to New England Geo Systems, who updates the GIS maps annually prior to the

**TOWN OF EAST WINDSOR
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
Special Meeting
Budget Workshop Meeting – February 21, 2019
WORKSHOP MINUTES -**

issuance of tax bills. Treasurer O'Toole noted the Assessor's maps are the only "clean" maps with correct lot lines; all other department mapping includes additional layers, such as wetlands.

Selectman Szymanski questioned if Ms. Totz tracks the number of appeals and the dollar amount. Ms. Totz suggested they don't track anything taxwise but they do track the appeals processed through the Board of Assessment Appeals. Selectman Szymanski questioned if those numbers are up, or down; what could be done to reduce those numbers? Ms. Totz suggested the main issues arise during the revaluation year. They currently have approximately 30 appeals, which is a reasonable number. Yesterday was the last day to file for an appeal. They dealt with 7 court appeals; we've settled all but 2; the appeals are part of the reduction in the Grand List.

Selectman Hoffman noted the increase in the budget request for *Education and Dues*; he questioned if the requirements have increased? Ms. Totz reported one of her people is going for her certification; she's trying to get her into as many classes as possible. Ms. Totz also needs to maintain her certification. Ms. Totz reported she also teaches classes – once a year at UCONN, and roadshow classes in the Fall in Rocky Hill; teaching those classes apply towards her certification. Discussion followed regarding the composition of the students, and the types of classes being taught.

Deputy First Selectman Dearborn questioned what's the total taxable property in East Windsor? Treasurer O'Toole indicated it's the \$956 million. Deputy First Selectman Dearborn questioned the \$15 million? Treasurer O'Toole clarified that's the growth from the \$941 million, but the \$941 million last year when they budgeted was \$959 million so that's the \$18 million loss she spoke of earlier; offset by the \$15 million that equals a \$3 million loss in the Grand List. By the time they took into consideration the adjustments – the court cases and exemptions – it took us down \$18 million. Discussion followed regarding the revenue realized by a 1% tax on the \$956,000 taxable assets. Treasurer O'Toole suggested if using the current mill rate of 33.9 it would produce \$32,422,000 in tax revenue; at a collection rate of 98.5% (which is set by the Board of Finance derived by experience) you would realize \$31,936,500, which is \$87,000 less than that was budgeted for last year.

First Selectman Maynard questioned the total salary request? Treasurer O'Toole and Ms. Totz indicated the salary request is \$194,600. Treasurer O'Toole cited Ms. Totz didn't prepare the budget last year so she couldn't do comparatives as the other departments did; the level of detail is a new request initiated by Treasurer O'Toole this year.

PRESENTATION/Board of Assessment Appeals – 810400:

The total Budget request for the Board of Assessment Appeals is \$1,550, which represents a zero increase.

No discussion.

**TOWN OF EAST WINDSOR
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
Special Meeting
Budget Workshop Meeting – February 21, 2019
WORKSHOP MINUTES -**

**PRESENTATIONS/ 6:20 p.m. – Human Services -411700 ; Senior Services (Senior Center)
- 710100; and Parks and Recreation –710200:**

Melissa Maltese, Director of Recreation and Community Services, joined the Board. Mrs. Maltese began her presentations with the Human Services Budget.

PRESENTATION/Human Services – 411700:

The total Budget request for Human Services is \$169,907 for FY 2019 – 2020, for an increase of 37.63%.

Selectman Hoffman requested an explanation of the *Energy Assistance Program* listed under *Activities, Functions and Responsibilities*. Mrs. Maltese reported Energy Assistance is run through CRT (the Community Renewal Team), a Federal assistance program, which assists Towns to get fuel for their residents. The Human Services staff assists residents to apply for assistance from September through March each year via application forms; other Towns choose to send their residents to Hartford for assistance. Last year the Town received \$113,736 in energy assistance funds to assist East Windsor residents. CRT decides what amount of assistance a resident qualifies for; residents receive a letter notifying them of their approval for aid from CRT; they deal with the vendor through CRT; no money changes hands locally by the applicant or the vendor. Mrs. Maltese reported this year they've processed 234 applications. Mrs. Maltese also noted the Town received \$3,000 for Operation Fuel, a State Fund, last year. Mrs. Maltese reported they try to use these funds for people who don't qualify for Energy Assistance; sometimes a resident can be over-qualified by as little as \$100. Selectman Szymanski questioned how many of the 234 applicants were rejected? Mrs. Maltese didn't have that information available during the presentation but will provide it for Selectman Szymanski.

Selectman Hoffman questioned the extent of the homeless population in East Windsor. Mrs. Maltese indicated it fluctuates based on the season; she noted many are self-sufficient and don't want assistance. She explained that End Homeless Connecticut is an agency that tries to identify residents and help them get into shelters and gets them cell phones, and connected with a food pantry. She noted many want to live in their cars. Discussion continued regarding the number of homeless; states such as California and Florida have a much higher population than Connecticut for instance. Mrs. Maltese noted Enfield recently received a \$310,000 grant through CHR to combat homelessness; East Windsor wrote a letter of support on their behalf. The grant will enable Enfield to direct the homeless toward available services.

Mrs. Maltese reported the Town received a \$14,000 grant to create a Youth Services Bureau; the Town agreed to provide a \$14,000 funding match. Selectman Bowsza is on the Board of the Youth Services Bureau. Mrs. Maltese reported she will be hiring a part-time coordinator for the Youth Services Bureau. They are also eligible for enrichment grants; East Windsor received \$4,600 in enrichment money and the East Windsor Public Schools was deemed a school based

**TOWN OF EAST WINDSOR
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
Special Meeting
Budget Workshop Meeting – February 21, 2019
WORKSHOP MINUTES -**

diversion school and received \$10,000, which will be given to the Youth Services Bureau so they will be starting an after school leadership and adventure program at the Middle School with that funding. Mrs. Maltese noted she is requesting \$4,000 for programing for the Youth Services Bureau for first aid, CPR, parenting classes, and other classes.

Selectman Hoffman questioned what the \$41,000 salary line will fund. Treasurer O'Toole cited the \$41,000 salary line has two parts tied to it. One is the \$24,000 for the Youth Services Bureau Coordinator which is offset by the \$14,000 in revenue; Mrs. Maltese clarified the second \$17,000 is a funding request to hire a part-time clerical person in the Human Services Department to greet clients, answer phones, and make appointments while other staff is busy working with residents. Mrs. Maltese cited the confidentiality issues associated with Human Services clients; the additional position would enable the department to give clients privacy while processing their applications, and reduce overload for existing staff. Discussion continued regarding current staffing levels.

Selectman Szymanski noted the spend through January is \$54,900; he questioned the projected run rate to the budget? Treasurer O'Toole suggested the spend in salaries is 56%; there should be 44% remaining in everyone's budget.

Mrs. Maltese reported they are seeing more evictions this year. They've recently dealt with a relocation because the renter's dwelling was condemned by the Town. Because this was a rental situation the renter received \$4,000 in assistance for a hotel and moving expenses. The Tax Collector will put a lien on the house so the property owner has to reimburse the Town. Residents being evicted don't receive any relocation assistance. The Town takes ownership of their personal property and stores it for 15 days; those tenants have to purchase the rental unit from the Town to get their belongings. Mrs. Maltese reported they're averaging one eviction a month.

Mrs. Maltese noted she had requested First Selectman Maynard discuss changing the name of this department to Community Services as people confuse the department with Human Resources. She recalled the Board had considered Social Services instead; she's fine with that. She was trying to create an umbrella of the three services for the residents. Selectman Szymanski suggested he had suggested Social Services as the people who will be looking for assistance are familiar with that name on the State level.

PRESENTATION/Parks and Recreation – 710200:

The total Budget request for Parks and Recreation for FY 2019 – 2020 is \$282,724, for an increase of 0.56%.

See budget presentation continued during the Regular Board of Selectmen's February 21st Meeting following this Workshop.

**TOWN OF EAST WINDSOR
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
Special Meeting
Budget Workshop Meeting – February 21, 2019
WORKSHOP MINUTES -**

PRESENTATION/Senior Services (Center) - 710100;

The total Budget request for Senior Services (Senior Center) for FY 2019 – 2020 is \$253,413, for an increase of 8.39%.

See budget presentation continued during the Regular Board of Selectmen's February 2st Meeting following this Workshop.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION: None.

ADJOURNMENT:

MOTION: To ADJOURN this Workshop Meeting at 6:55 p.m.

Maynard moved/Dearborn seconded/DISCUSSION: None.

VOTE: **In Favor:** **Unanimous (Maynard/Dearborn/Bowsza/Hoffman/Szymanski)**

Respectfully submitted

Peg Hoffman, Recording Secretary, East Windsor Board of Selectmen