

# **TOWN OF EAST WINDSOR BOARD OF SELECTMEN**

## **SPECIAL MEETING Budget Presentations - Workshop**

**Wednesday, February 24, 2021**

**7:00 p.m.**

**East Windsor, Connecticut**

Meeting held via ZOOM Teleconference

Meeting ID: 332 683 3563

Town Hall closed to the Public by

Executive Order of First Selectman Jason E. Bowsza

Due to Coronavirus pandemic

### **Meeting Minutes**

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

#### **Board of Selectmen:**

Jason E. Bowsza, First Selectman

Marie DeSousa, Deputy First Selectman

Alan Baker, Selectman

Sarah Muska, Selectman

Charlie Nordell, Selectman

**ATTENDANCE:** **Board of Selectmen:** Jason E. Bowsza, First Selectman; Marie DeSousa, Deputy First Selectman; Alan Baker, Selectman; Sarah Muska, Selectman; Charlie Nordell, Selectman

**ABSENT:** All Selectmen were present this evening.

**GUESTS/PRESENTERS signing in to teleconference:** **Treasurer's Office:** Amy O'Toole, Town Treasurer; **Board of Finance:** Jerilyn Corso, Chairman; Karen Christensen, Noreen Farmer, Tom Lansner; **Agricultural Commission:** Albert Grant, Chairman; **American Heritage River Commission:** Barbara Sherman, Dick Sherman, Chairman; **Conservation Commission:** Albert Grant.

#### **1. TIME AND PLACE OF SPECIAL MEETING:**

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First Selectman Bowsza called the February 24, 2021 Special Meeting/Budget Presentations – Workshop of the East Windsor Board of Selectmen to order at 7:00. The Meeting is being held via teleconference due to closure of the Town Hall to the Public as the result of the coronavirus pandemic.

**2. ATTENDANCE:**

First Selectman Bowsza noted the Board has established a quorum with five members present via video conference.

**3. PRESENTATIONS**

**Agricultural Commission – Account #10054170:**

The total Budget request for the Agricultural Commission for FY 2021 – 2022 is \$500, which is a zero increase.

Albert Grant, Chairman of the Agricultural Commission, joined the Board virtually.

Chairman Grant reported the budget request for this year for the Agricultural Commission is \$500 to pay for the recording secretary.

Chairman Grant advised the Board the Agricultural Commission continues to sponsor the Community Garden, which has become very popular. The Community Garden was original started to make people aware of the benefits of growing their own food, but it also makes people aware of our agricultural heritage.

Chairman Grant also reported the Agricultural Commission is working to rejuvenate more of the Kogut farm, which the Town purchased, for rental. He's currently working on getting estimates to clear an abandoned tobacco field of poles, wires, and other materials left at the site.

The Agricultural Commission is also working on accumulating a list of local farms, what they produce, and their contact information to promote their farms to the public.

As with other Commissions, Chairman Grant indicated the Commission could also use more members as well.

Selectman Baker indicated it appears both Commissions have a lot going on. Chairman Grant noted there isn't a lot of pressure to build at present; he suggested this is a good time to concentrate on open space and decide how the Town wants to build out.

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Selectman Baker reported that recently Ruth Calabrese of the Planning Department presented an update on the status of the Plan of Conservation and Development and the goals and action items. Selectman Baker noted much work continues on the POCD goals, which include involvement and goals for the Agricultural and Conservation Commissions. First Selectman Bowsza suggested Planning Director Chapin and Zoning and Wetlands Official Calabrese are both hitting the ground running on that project.

**Conservation Commission – Account #1005417:**

The total Budget request for the Conservation Commission for FY 2021 – 2022 is \$500, which is a zero increase.

Chairman Grant reported the budget request for the Conservation Commission for Fiscal Year 2021 – 2022 is \$500 for the Recording Secretary.

Chairman Grant noted the Commission continues to try to get the word out for the need to preserve Open Space, especially farmland. He noted the Scantic River corridor is a target for conservation because it's not buildable, and also to provide public access to the area. Chairman Grant indicated the Conservation Commission is looking for ways to refund the Open Space Fund so the Town can take advantage of partnering with the State to purchase Conservation Easements within town.

**American Heritage River Commission (AHRC) – Account #10054140  
(under Activities, Fees, and Organizations) - (TAB 2)**

Dick Sherman, Chairman of the American Heritage River Commission, and Barbara Sherman, joined the Board.

Mrs. Sherman reported the budget request for Fiscal Year 2021 – 2022 is the same as last year - \$3,500; how they've allocated it depends on what's going on.

**Printing** has increased as the supply of "guides" has been depleted due to increased activity along the river; funding has been moved into the printing line to publish additional copies.

**Reagents** – Dr. Martin, who assists the Commission in testing the condition of the river, became ill during the past year and closed her lab for a period of time. She had already purchased reagents for the schools; the AHRC was able to use those reagents without expending money from their budget. The money allocated for reagents was used to purchase signs for "The Braille Trail", which has picked up a lot of interest.

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**Testing** remains ongoing; Dr. Martin and Dr. Dubbie test water samples for their classwork. Results go to the State. Mrs. Sherman reported the Scantic is one of the most polluted watersheds in the State; Dr. Martin and Dr. Dubbie hope to discover the source of the pollution. Mrs. Sherman reported Dr. Martin submitted a grant through the Long Island Recovery for the purchase of reagents, which would preclude the Town from having to fund that item in the future.

First Selectman Bowsza asked for comments from the Board of Finance members, as well as the Board. No one raised any questions.

Mrs. Sherman advised the Board the American Heritage River Commission didn't have their annual New Year's Day Hike this year because of the limitations of COVID on public gatherings but they announced the trail would be available for a non-guided walk. They still had their "sign-up" boards available at various locations and 118 people signed in for the New Year's Day Hike. Mrs. Sherman suggested the trails are really being used. Donations of money and food were accepted; over 200 pounds of food was donated to the 5 Corner Cupboard. Mrs. Sherman reported the American Heritage River Commission is giving back to the Town. First Selectman Bowsza noted the Commission has built something very special that a lot of people enjoy.

**Selectman, Activities and Fees, Legal, Ethics –(TAB 2)**

**1. *Selectman's Budget - Account #10054111:***

Treasurer O'Toole clarified that the revised budget document reflects a reduction of 2.9% from the previous year. First Selectman Bowsza indicated his budget is budget neutral vs the original budget request; there's an \$8500 decrease against the revised budget. First Selectman Bowsza queried the Board for questions regarding specific lines?

Deputy First Selectman DeSousa questioned clarification of the First Selectman's job description. Treasurer O'Toole noted that last Summer First Selectman Bowsza was given a salary increase by the Board. When reviewing the Munis report it includes the current year revised, which includes that raise. Treasurer O'Toole noted First Selectman Bowsza cut several other lines, and sent some of his professional services expenses to the Planning Department. First Selectman Bowsza reported his department budget, from the beginning of the current year to next year, is dead flat.

Selectman Nordell questioned if **outreach** represents the cost of the 5 Village Voice? First Selectman Bowsza replied affirmatively, noting the \$10,000 was put there with the

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intention that it would be supplemented by the 5 Village Voice, which was anticipated to cost \$3,000 per edition and be supported by advertising. Because the advertising has been running significantly higher the editions have cost much less. Selectman Nordell suggested the \$10,000 is more of a placeholder, although it could be available if the advertising didn't support the production cost. First Selectman Bowsza concurred, but noted he has reduced that line item to \$7,000 in his 2021 – 2022 budget request.

Selectman Muska noted the **full-time salary line** is \$12,524 in the budget book, while the Munis report reflects \$4,000+; First Selectman Bowsza indicated the \$4,000+ is the correct figure. Selectman Muska questioned if that's a contractual requirement? First Selectman Bowsza noted none of his employees are part of a union; we're contracted but none are part of a bargaining unit and have been proposed for a 2% increase.

First Selectman Bowsza noted the Selectmen's Office does a lot of **centralized expenditures**, such as toner and supplies for all departments, and most of the operational postage.

Selectman Muska questioned if the **employee awards** come from the outreach line? First Selectman Bowsza the awards come from the recognition line in Activities and Fees.

## **2.     *Activities, Fees and Associations – Account #10054140:***

First Selectman Bowsza cited these expenditures are mostly set by per capita assessments, not much changes unless the population changes considerably. He reviewed the following significant changes:

**Cemetery Association** – currently funded at \$15,000, their request was for \$25,000.  
**Historical Society** – The budget book shows the Fiscal Year request for the previous year was \$1,000; that figure has been zeroed out for Fiscal Year 2021 – 2022 at the request of the Historical Society.

First Selectman Bowsza called for questions from the Board and the Board of Finance members.

Selectman Nordell questioned the allocation for **the 4-Town Fair**. First Selectman Bowsza cited the 4-Town Fair Committee has requested \$1,000; he reviewed the current political issues raised by neighbors in Somers.

First Selectman Bowsza queried the Board and Board of Finance members for comments; no one raised any additional questions.

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**3.     *Legal – Account #10054139:***

First Selectman Bowsza reported he has kept the budget for **legal fees** the same as last year at \$280,000. He indicated we have three collective bargaining units that are out as of June 30<sup>th</sup>, Treasurer O'Toole's contract that's up in April, and Town Engineer Norton's contract that expires later in the year. First Selectman Bowsza indicated he hopes to settle several of those negotiations before the end of this Fiscal Year. Discussion continued regarding the status of various legal activities; First Selectman Bowsza suggested sharing that information in Executive Session.

**4.     *Ethics – Account #10054114:***

First Selectman Bowsza indicated the budget request for the Ethics Commission for Fiscal Year 2021 – 2022 is the standard \$500 request for a recording secretary.

**Treasurer, Board of Finance, Insurance, Pension:**

**1.     *Treasurer – Account #10054137:***

Treasurer O'Toole reviewed the following budget requests:

**Full-Time Salary** - no salary "ask" as they're all out of contract.

**Part-time salary** – standard 2% increase for permanent employees. This is a 9 ½ hour part-time position filled in December which has been an awesome addition to the Department.

**Overtime** – requested a slight increase based on status of expenditures to date.

**Professional Services** - \$600 increase requested for payroll processing fees.

First Selectman Bowsza asked for comments from the Board or the Board of Finance members; no one raised any questions.

**2.     *Board of Finance – Account #10054118:***

**Audit** – Treasurer O'Toole indicated we went out to bid for the audit in the Spring of 2020, the \$44,000 is the cost of the audit. There will be some savings as a Federal report wasn't required.

**Annual Report** – reduced because the prior budgeted request hasn't been spent. They are now using CCM.

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First Selectman Bowsza asked if there were any questions from the Board or the Board of Finance members?

Selectman Nordell questioned that a portion of the audit has been allocated for the **Broad Brook Fire Department?** Treasurer O'Toole replied negatively; First Selectman Bowsza replied negatively, noting that was discussed previously as part of an Executive Session. Treasurer O'Toole clarified we don't charge anyone for their part of the audit, even the Board of Education. Selectman Nordell indicated questions were raised at a Warehouse Point Fire District meeting which he agreed to bring to the Board; their concern was not charging the Broad Brook Fire Department for the audit and snow removal. Treasurer O'Toole clarified that those charges aren't specifically charged to each department. She suggested the Warehouse Point Fire District is required to have a separate audit because they're a district, but the Town departments, including the Board of Education, aren't required to pay for separate audits, the Town is charged for the audit expense. First Selectman Bowsza noted we also don't charge out for snow removal for Town buildings; Treasurer O'Toole clarified electric costs and other utilities aren't separated by department but are rather charged as one charge for Town properties. Discussion continued regarding the expenses of the Broad Brook Fire Department vs. the Warehouse Point Fire District.

**3. *Insurance:***

**LAP Insurance** - Treasurer O'Toole reported this charge is now in the middle of all of the Land Use Boards. There is no increase on the charge, the deductible is the standard \$5,000. No change from the current year.

Treasurer O'Toole reported she's just been advised today that CIRMA will no longer provide coverage **for cyber crime**. Preliminary quotes indicated the cost may be upwards of \$32,000 annually.

**4. *Employee Benefits – Account #10055000:***

**Health insurance** – Treasurer O'Toole reported level 3 for **health insurance** has been reduced; the original budgeted request was at 8%, the quote recently received has come in at 3% for active employees and 10% for retirees. The health insurance line has been reduced to 3%, which is a reduction of \$75,000. First Selectman Bowsza indicated the cost of employee insurance went from 18% last year to 3% this year.

**27<sup>th</sup> Payroll** – reduced by \$5,000 for the **Broad Brook Fire Department**.

**FICA** – reduced by \$20,000 for the **Broad Brook Fire Department**.

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**DB Pension** – Treasurer O’Toole indicated that figure is a guess as the actual cost has not yet been provided by the actuary.

**401 and 457** – increased slightly

**OPEB** – covers all payouts to all employees leaving East Windsor’s employment.

**Tuition Reimbursement** – being increased to cover several employees from several departments who are taking degree courses.

**Unemployment Compensation** – Treasurer O’Toole indicated this figure is just a guess, the Town only pays if an employee makes a claim to collect.

**Workers Compensation** – based on the salaries of the people who are working.

**Heart and Hypertension** – slight reduction.

**Physicals** – figure is also a guess based on the number of employees coming in.

Selectman Nordell questioned where **firefighters physicals** were covered previously?

First Selectman Bowsza and Treasurer O’Toole clarified the fire departments have always had a line within their respective budgets for firefighter physicals; the police department has a separate line for employee physicals as well. Treasurer O’Toole clarified this budget line is for other Town department employees physicals.

Deputy First Selectman DeSousa questioned if the **Heart and Hypertension law** changed? First Selectman Bowsza and Treasurer O’Toole replied affirmatively. Discussion followed regarding the initiation of the law and the number of employees within the Police and Fire Departments who could file claims under this line item.

***Contingency Account #10059900***

Brief discussion occurred regarding pending contract negotiations vs. the budget request.

First Selectman Bowsza asked for questions regarding contingency; no one requested to speak.

***Revenue:***

First Selectman Bowsza and Treasurer O’Toole reviewed the following:

**General Town** – flat funded, with the exception of a \$3,000 reduction in Adult Education because the numbers from the State came down \$3,000.

**Tax Collection projections** – up \$750,000. Treasurer O’Toole indicated that’s 2.3% which is the latest adjusted Grand List which is based on current mill rate, and current collection rate of 98.5%.



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**Tax Collector/Interest and Liens** – the Tax Collector has requested the \$100,000 anticipated revenue be reduced to \$75,000.

**Tax Collector/Aircraft** – requested to be reduced from \$4,200 to \$3,250.

**Treasurer/interest income** - budgeted at \$150,000, reduced to \$25,000 based on current amount collected at significantly reduced interest rate.

**Budgeted use of Fund Balance** – choice of use is a Board of Finance responsibility.

**Other Departments:**

**Town Clerk** – no change

**Planning** – no change

**Police** – no change

**Building** – no change

**DPW** – no change

**Senior Services** – no change

**Park & Recreation** – no change

**Total Revenue anticipated is \$41,154,248.**

Selectman Baker asked if any additional money could be received from the State;  
Treasurer O'Toole replied negatively, noting the State money has already been received.

**4. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:**

First Selectman Bowsza requested comments from the public; no one requested to speak.

**5. ADJOURNMENT:**

**MOTION:** To ADJOURN this Meeting at 8:01 p.m.

**Baker moved/Muska seconded/DISCUSSION:** None.

**VOTE by rollcall:** In Favor: Baker/Muska/Nordell/DeSousa  
(No one opposed/No abstentions)

Respectfully submitted

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Peg Hoffman, Recording Secretary, East Windsor Board of Selectmen